Interview with Ben Franklin Dixon

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

BEN FRANKLIN DIXON

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[This transcript was not edited]

Q: Mr. Dixon, I wonder if you could give me a little about your background before we get into the foreign affairs part. Where did you come from?

DIXON: I grew up in North Carolina. I went to the Gibraltan High School in Raleigh and then to the University of North Carolina. I graduated early. I had more credits than I realized, so I spent the rest of my senior year in France.

Q: This was when?

DIXON: Nineteen thirty-nine. I was in the class of 1939, and I came back. I had been going to the US Marine Corps' Officers Training School from 1937. I went to that. I had been appointed as an instructor at the University of Virginia. At the end of the summer, I completed the Marine business and I went to Virginia, where I helped in the American government class and was in the graduate school.

I was asked to come on active duty by the Marine Corps. They'd put it off until the academic year. I went to the Marine Corps the first of July 1940 and stayed seven years.

I was a platoon leader in a rifle company and then a machine gun company. Then I was in the intelligence section. Then was in Cuba for, I guess, about nine months, in the First Marine Brigade. We were supposed to go and take Martinique. We made three strikes at it, but never really went ashore.

Q: Martinique being under Vichy France at that time.

DIXON: Yes. Martinique, we found the Germans were actually using it as a hospital rather than using it as a base, so we were called back. But I spent nine months in the flats of Cuba near the naval base, except for these forays we made towards Martinique.

I came back. I was put in the intelligence section of the President's... Corps. I studied aerial photography. The real war had been on pretty strong, and the British were hot on aerial photography, and I was sent to aerial photography school.

After the war started, I was transferred back to the President's Marine Brigade, which had become the First Division. I was the battalion operations officer for the Third Battalion, First Marines. I stayed in that capacity until Guadalcanal.

We were in New Zealand and we were combat-loading the ship to go to Guadalcanal. It was in the middle of their winter, in July, and, as the operations officer, I was supervising the combat-loading of the ship. I was out in the rain a lot. I got a heavy case of pneumonia and was put in the hospital, so I did not get to Guadalcanal.

I joined the First Division later on and was sent back to the United States to help form the Fourth Division. I did all the personnel work. I selected all the officers for all the regiments and generally set up the administrative set-up for the Fourth Marine Division. I was then sent to Staff and Command School.

Rejoined the Fourth Division and stayed with them through Tinian, where I was wounded. I was in the hospital for a lot of patching up work, for a good while. I then went to the Amphibious Corps and for the Okinawa landing, and stayed there until the end of the war.

I came back. I chose to come back. I had more overseas service than anybody in the Division, and so I got first priority to come back. Because I was going to China, I went to Washington. I was assigned to the State Department Foreign Liquidation Commission.

Q: This was in 1945?

DIXON: Forty-six. I worked on this program. They were having problems in supplying the Yangtze. The Yangtze's in three stages, so I made a study to find out which kind of shipping that we had could be used in the three stages of the Yangtze.

Q: You're talking about the height of the river and all this?

DIXON: The characteristics of the river. It's sort of a normal-flowing river around Shanghai. But you get up and you get rapids and you get all sorts of other problems, so that you have to have ships of different characteristics to get all the way up there.

Anyway, I located the kind of shipping that would fit those stages. We then found there was a problem with petroleum supply. So I asked and they made an aerial survey of the Yangtze River. And I recommended certain petroleum supply stops to be set up there, which they did. And after about four or five months, we got the ships going up the Yangtze furnished, giving food and other supplies up there.

I was going to get out of the Marine Corps, take over that same job, when Marshall's mission was closed. I had gotten so intertwined with that, that...

Q: This is General George Marshall, going to try to reconcile the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek.

DIXON: Yes. Well, yes. Anyway, I had applied for and been approved to join the State Department Civil Service. I was therefore eligible and on the list to get a job.

I was given a job in the Department of International Conferences. I was assigned primarily to an effort made after World War II, under the United Nations, to set up an organization concerned with communications, which had to do with radio communications, short wave communications, aerial frequencies for aviation, telephone, telegraph, and so forth. So the series of conferences was held, first in Atlantic City, then Geneva, then Paris, and I attended all of these as the administrative officer. I served on the drafting committee to draft the final documents, and I handled the protocol as well as the administrative aspects of it.

After two years of that, I was asked if I were interested in being in the NEA, in the GTI: Greece, Turkey, and Iran.

Q: This is the Near Eastern and African Bureau of the State Department.

DIXON: Yes. Well, I'd like to say that we got all of the basic work done in these communications conferences that set up the ITU, International Telecommunications Union, which is one of the subsidiary organizations of the UN in Geneva. We did all these various deals and set up the regulations, the organizational structure. The whole organization, we set up in that two-year period.

Q: This was sort of the time when relations between, you might say, the West and the East were getting strained. In this technical field, were there any problems, particularly, say, with the Soviets?

DIXON: We started out with the Soviets when they first came to the first conference in Atlantic City. They came there; they fettered their arms. They had a big party for the

American delegation, at which they all got drunk. Everybody got drunk. We were great buddies. We had a great time with them.

I got into an argument with one guy. I told him that John Paul Jones was the father of the Russian navy. He said, no, no, they had trained John Paul Jones, who headed the American navy.

I was also taken off by Boris Urovsky, who was my opposite number on the Russian delegation, who took me into a room, locked the door, opened up a big closet, and pulled out a huge book of stamps they were going to give to everybody. And he gave me a copy of this, saying he wanted me to be sure to have one, and to hide it inside my shirt so that...

Anyway, we got along absolutely wonderfully with the Soviets. They suggested that the five great powers get together, decide what they want to do, and then tell the rest of the conference that this was the way it was going to be. Nobody concurred in that, except the Soviets. And things got slightly frosty. In August, when Vishinsky made that speech at the UN...

Q: He was the delegate to the UN.

DIXON: Just like shutting the door; the Soviets hardly spoke to us.

Q: This was at your technical level.

DIXON: Yes, well, we worked as a whole delegation, it wasn't just the technicians.

We were in a big hotel in Atlantic City. We took up the whole hotel, and there were other people in other hotels, too, but there were photographers. They had a bunch of pictures they put up every day. And shortly after the break, they had a picture there of the deputy Soviet thing, who had his finger up his nose up to his second joint, which they put up there.

And we had gotten, by this time, very frosty. They came and made a protest that we'd done this on purpose, because we were the kind of people we were and that sort of thing.

But there were little indications like that, that things, you know, were really bad. I maintained a fairly good friendship with my opposite number and also certain people who weren't quite as bad, that didn't get as bad as they got later on in Geneva. The next conference we had, they absolutely hardly even spoke to us. And the Cold War was really on then.

But, as I say, in that time we got the whole post-war telecommunications system set up.

Q: Well then, you came back. When did you join NEA, the Near Eastern and African Bureau?

DIXON: Well, while I was in Paris, at the conference there, I had been transferred to NEA. I was to finish up the conference. Then I went to Greece, to sort of learn the country. And I spent three or four months in Greece.

Q: This was when?

DIXON: Nineteen forty-eight, summer of '48. At that time, we were very much concerned. We had Tsaldaris and Venizelos, who were opposing political parties, but on the right. We made them join forces and have a government. Things were pretty bad. I mean, things in Greece had just been awful. The Greeks had been encouraged to join with the Andartes to fight the Germans. A lot of the Andartes, under Markos, turned out to be just strictly Communists who were trying to take over Greece. So it was not only fights between the rightist parties, but also, in the leftist parties, those who were leftist-inclined but patriotic to Greece, and those were leftist-supplied who were trying to follow the Soviet direction. This made for terrible squabbles in Greece. Terrible things were done. And the Greek government, in places where they were trying to operate, had big, in effect, camps in which they retained people they felt that were not trustworthy. The American government

felt that they were not being very sure about some of the people. We felt they had more people detained than they should have, and it was causing a lot of dislocation and a lot of other political problems.

So one of the things, while I was learning there about Greece, I went down south and took a look around there. The Peloponnese by that time had been pretty much cleared of the Andotti forces, but there were still some places here and there. The British police mission had a group in the Peloponnese. We had taken over from the British, but they were sort of supervising things down there. I went down and made a call on them, and they said they have an interesting situation. We went out, and they had cornered a bunch of Andartes in a building, the Greek security police or Greek army, sort of indistinguishable. And they had I don't know how many people in there. But the British were saying, “Look, they're cornered. Just call them and tell them to come on out. They're going to be there until they have to come out, so they might as well come out now.” Well, they tried that, and they didn't come out. In a little while, the Greeks found a way of setting their house on fire. Which they did, and they began to stream out of there. And the Greeks shot them as they came out, so the British tried to stop them. Well, they finally did stop them, but it was an awful mess.

Q: It was a pretty brutal situation.

DIXON: Well, you know, during the war, I saw just as brutal situations, too. And I don't know, you know, it's hard to say whether these people had been threatening them. It's very difficult.

I remember, in the Caribbean when I was on a transport, we came fairly close to a British ship. It had stopped what looked like a merchant vessel, and there were people getting in boats getting out of the ship. The British, it wasn't a destroyer, it was one of those smaller...

Q: Corvette, probably.

DIXON: The British corvette swung around and just gunned up a whole boatload of those Germans and made them get back in their boat. They had put explosives in the ship, and they made them go back and undo the explosives, and then they took them prisoner and took the ship. The Germans were going to blow up the ship. But the British, you know, just to show them they meant business, they killed a whole boatload. They got a machine gun and shot them all down. The rest of them went back on the boat.

You know, it's difficult to say what was warfare and what was... The conditions in Greece were terrible.

Q: Oh, no, no, I... Well, now, you went through this sort of indoctrination bit. You were there, this was, what, you say '48?

DIXON: Yes. Well, I came back and went on the Greek desk. But I also went up in the northern part of Greece where the fighting was going on.

One of the people said, “You know, we can take you right up to the front lines; you can hear the bullets whistling and so forth.”

I said, “Look, I was the assistant division operations officer. I can understand a military situation from the map. I almost lost my life in my own war, I'm not going to go and take a chance in your war. So I'm staying right here.”

But I did do a foolish thing. We went up to Thessaloniki. When they had fought up into the Yugoslav border and the Yugoslavs had opened the border, I went up to Gnjilane, over what had been a mined road. Which was pretty idiotic to do, but I was just anxious to see what was going on there. Bob Menem and I were the first people to go out to Makronisos Island, which is off the east coast of where Athens is, at the end of that peninsula there,

and saw that concentration camp. They had cleaned it up, but you could tell things had been pretty elementary for them.

Q: What was your impression, at the time, of the Greek government? I mean, as an American.

DIXON: The Greek government, mainly run by us. We had a tremendous...we poured in, through the AID thing, people in almost every department of the Greek government, to help them do their accounting, to do their...I don't know, you name it. And we had people there who were specialists to help them get the government back together and working. And that went on for a couple of years until they got the government sort of in place.

In 1945, they had had the Varkiza Agreement, which was supposed to distinguish between people who were loyal Greeks, who were leftist, or even on the rightist side, that had fought against the Germans, and the people who really looked to the Soviet Union for guidance, so to speak. It was that, I think, for the first time, made it pretty clear as to which side was which side. But it had not really penetrated out in the country very much. And, you know, the Andartes were controlling northern Greece at that time, so they had no real way of knowing what this was about.

Q: Many of those villages were just taken over by one side or the other. Back on the desk, what were our major concerns about Greece?

DIXON: Our major concern was to free Greece. We had 25,000 Greek children who had been taken into Albania, Bulgaria, and God knows where. We tried to get those children returned. We tried to keep the Greek government moderate and reconstructing the country. We tried to keep the Greeks out of stirring up the pot in Cyprus, where we were having a lot of problems. The British were not really respecting the civil rights of the Cypriots. They were not doing things that would make the Cypriots happy at staying Cypriots. We were trying also to ameliorate relations between Albania and Greece, and Bulgaria and Greece. The Bulgars were particularly difficult because they kept going into

the Ebros River and coming into Greece and one thing and another. The Greeks were mainly responsible for what they called North Epirns, which was Albania, and they were doing a lot of things they shouldn't have been doing there.

So we were interested in reconstructing the country, trying to get the government in a moderate posture and carrying out the reconstruction. We were trying to get a political easing-down of the animosities between the loyal leftists and the loyal rightists. A very important program was to train the Greek army to protect and defend itself. So we were concerned with military programs, aid programs, advice to the government, and all these other...

Q: What about the king? Did we have any particular feelings that the king was...?

DIXON: The king was welcomed back. He was more or less apolitical. His wife, however...

Q: Was this Frederika?

DIXON: Yes. She was the granddaughter of the Kaiser, cousin to the king of England. She was very fond of General Marshall, and she used to give letters to the embassy, which were sent to me, and I took them to General Marshall.

Q: He was secretary of state at that time.

DIXON: He was secretary of defense. He had been secretary of state. In '49, he was secretary of defense.

One of the letters was asking that he get her estate returned to her in Austria. It was necessary to restate her estate in what they called the Grund Book in Austria. I set up the scheme to get this done, and I think they did do it. But the queen was always fiddling with political problems and politicians and so forth. And one of the things we tried to do was sort of calm her down a bit.

Q: Well, she continued to be that, even after her husband died and her son took over. She continued to be a major thorn in the diplomatic saddle, or something like that, didn't she?

DIXON: Yes.

Q: How much control did you feel that we had, say, with the Greek parties?

DIXON: Well, I think we had no control over the leftists. You know, we were Santa Claus to the rest of them—except the leftists didn't acknowledge it—but we were Santa Claus to Greece. It was hard for them to, you know, do anything that we didn't like. And we really sat hard on a few things.

One thing we were not entirely able to stop was some graft that went on. I remember that Tsaldaris, who was the prime minister after I was there, was later accused of taking a bribe. He was running again for office, and he said it was untrue, filed a suit against the person that alleged this, and so forth. After he lost and was out as prime minister, the court case came up. And he said, in effect, that the article said, “Dressed in a gray suit, Prime Minister Tsaldaris went into the Customs House in Piraeus and accepted a bribe from so and so and so and so.” Tsaldaris said he was not, he was wearing a brown suit. But all that time, he'd held off any trial of the thing, and that was the only thing that he...

Q: What about Ambassador Peurifoy? He was one of our most active ambassadors I think we had around. What was sort of your impression and that of the desk on his style of operation and his effect?

DIXON: Well, I remember one dispatch...not dispatch, one something I wrote. He had spoken to a Greek club, something like the Rotary or something like that, at which I think he said that they should stop having proportional representation. I forgot the king or the queen had said something. And I wrote a memo for George McGhee, who was the assistant secretary, saying, in effect, that Peurifoy had gone to the extreme limit of what an ambassador should go in saying publicly about what another government should do, and

that he had gone about as far as the king had in saying something else that he shouldn't have said.

Jack Peurifoy was primarily an administrator. He had no political sense at all. He had first-class people: Bob Menem, Norm Anschutz, Hal Miner, some of our best people there. He listened to them very carefully. He made an excellent ambassador.

We were having lots of problems with the British government about Cyprus and a couple of other things in Greece. He wrote a telegram in which he said he didn't mind telling the British about some things, but he didn't think we should get in bed and tell all.

Dulles was greatly offended by this and said he wanted him removed. Well, people tried to get Dulles to come off it, and he wouldn't. Jack was brought back. He had been very popular; everybody liked him. When he came back—I always met him at the airport—he came back looking pretty wounded. He said, “I gather I'm in pretty bad odor.”

And I said, “Well, I don't think Secretary Dulles likes you.”

And he wanted another job. I think Dulles didn't want to give him a job. But he looked around and found there was a job in Guatemala. And Earl Warren, who had just been appointed chief justice, he got to speak in his behalf, and he was given the job. Earl Warren was at the Supreme Court, and had not been there more than a week or something like that, and Jack wanted him to come down and swear him in. So arrangement was made, and we held that up in Dulles office. Dulles was on the Hill talking to somebody, and he came back. We were all standing there. In the meantime, Warren had brought a gown, a Justice gown, to put on. He didn't know how to get it on. So we were there trying to open the gown and figure out how to put it on and so forth, when the elevator opened and out stepped Foster Dulles. He was so surprised, he opened his mouth wide and his false teeth fell out. So we had to pick his false teeth up, and we got

the robe on Chief Justice Warren. Peurifoy looked very pleased; Dulles, gritting his teeth, looked absolutely furious.

But Jack went on to Guatemala, where they had that big to-do. But he did an excellent job in Greece.

Q: Well, it really was this thing that Dulles was such a sort of puritan that he just didn't like...?

DIXON: He was a silly ass.

Later on, I worked in NEA as the political-military type for George Allen. We were having what they called Operation Alpha, in which we were trying get the Israelis and the Egyptians to be more friendly to each other. And there were certain stages we were trying to go through. The Egyptians were running out of military equipment and they wanted more military aid. And Dulles was not particularly inclined towards it. I used to go with George Allen to talk to Dulles. I made the mistake, the first time I went there, of taking a bunch of papers with me, a couple of which I thought George might want to have. So we talked to Dulles, and he asked George something.

George said, “What about this?”

And I said, “Well, I've got a paper.”

And I took it out of this thing and gave it to Allen, he gave it to the secretary. I was sitting next to the secretary; Allen was sitting on the other side.

Dulles then picked up the papers and said, “What are these?”

I said, “They're not related to this. I've got something I've got to do, and I've just got my papers with me.”

“Well, what are they?” he said. “Let me see them.”

So he took the papers and looked through them and asked me some questions about them, which got the thing off the track, but anyway I got the papers back and we got back on the subject.

And one day, we were in there... The Egyptians had given an ultimatum, in effect, saying they'd been offered the arms they wanted from the Soviet Union, and were we going to give them or not?

Dulles said to Allen, and Francis Russell was also, who running the Alpha Operation, he said to Russell, “Have the Egyptians answered this last thing we sent them?”

Russell said, “No.”

He said, “Well, we're not going to give them the arms. I don't think the Russians are going to do it.”

So, you know, we lost the ball game.

Q: That was the beginning of... It was actually Czech arms, wasn't it, or something like that?

DIXON: I've forgotten what it was, but it was from the East, yes.

Q: But this was a real change that soured relations for...

DIXON: It soured the relations for years. And, you know, it was not anything that we did, but what we didn't do. And Dulles was responsible for it.

Q: And it was more by gut reaction rather than by...

DIXON: A lot of the things he did were emotional.

Q: Emotional rather than sitting back and this was a considered opinion of the Near Eastern Bureau or something like that. You, at that point, were basically saying we... I mean, you, I'm talking about you, George McGhee, and all. I mean, the idea that we should make some accommodation to the Egyptians?

DIXON: Exactly. We all felt we should. But Dulles wouldn't do it.

Q: Well, back now to Greece for just a bit. Were you there during something that's gained a lot of notoriety now, the Polk affair?

DIXON: Yes, I was in Thessaloniki after the thing had happened.

Q: Could you explain what it was, for the record, and then how we responded.

DIXON: Well, George Polk was a correspondent who had been in Athens. He was getting ready to go home, and he had been trying to talk to Markos.

Q: Markos being the head of the...

DIXON: Head of the Greek Andartes.

Q: Which were the Communist...

DIXON: Soviet-directed Communist organization.

Polk, through some sort of hokey-pokey, had been touched. You know, the Greeks are great for saying: I don't know anything, but my cousin knows this, and his friend is the man that does this and that and the other. Suddenly, out of all this kind of very Greek ambiance, he had wandered into somebody who was going to introduce him to Markos, to get an interview with Markos. He went up to Thessaloniki, and what did he do? He talked

to our people there in the Consulate General. Wally Gibson was the consul general. He talked to them, and I think they tried to suggest that there might be some hokey-pokey going on. But he went and met somebody. And the next day they found him floating in the bay. Some people thought he'd been in a rowboat and they'd shot him in the boat, or they'd maybe shot him ashore and taken him out in the boat and put him in the bay. It wasn't quite clear. But who shot him was a great problem. At that time, we felt it was very difficult to know who did it. It could have been done by the rightists; it could have been done by the leftists. None of it made much sense. There was no motivation for it on either side. We were very suspicious of all these... We had a number of things that said it was the left and it was the right, you know, all sorts of stories. None of them really made much sense. There was no motivation for it. So we came to the conclusion that something had gone wrong and this guy had known too much about somebody who was in the leftist operation who was in Thessaloniki. So when it didn't come off, they shot him. That seemed to be the prevailing opinion.

I understand there's now a book out which says, in effect, that Tsaldaris had some sort of draft scheme in which he was depositing money in some New York bank, and that Polk had found out about it and gone to Tsaldaris and said he was going to expose it unless he told him the whole story and so forth and so on, and that Tsaldaris had set this thing up. I think that's probably not true, but it's quite a mystery what happened there.

Q: It's one of those things that is played-on, to show how the American government tried to cover something up.

DIXON: I haven't seen the book.

Q: No, I haven't. I read one by the brother of Miner, or whatever his... Anyway, I read one, and there does seem to be an attempt to show this being a cover-up, that it was done by the right rather than the left.

DIXON: Well, the leftists were trying very hard to push that story. I just don't know, and I don't think anybody really knows. The people in the Consulate General in Thessaloniki and the CIA, who was Harlan Beebe, I think had gotten a pretty good line on what had happened. But, as I say, there's no motivation for it, unless it was that Polk had gotten on to the leftist organization in Thessaloniki that were, in effect, well hidden from the Greek police and so forth, and when they didn't get him to see Markos, they were frightened and they shot him. It's not impossible that Tsaldaris may have done it. Not impossible, but I think it's unlikely.

Q: It could have been done by a small coterie of the right, a small coterie of the left...

DIXON: Or somebody could have just decided, you know, for their own reasons. You know, there are a lot of people that are more Catholic than the pope and decide they're going to take matters in their own hands. Certainly nothing came out at that time, or since then, that really is positive proof of what happened. These are speculations, I think.

Q: How did we view Turkey? I mean, you were on the Greek desk and there's always the Cyprus issue. How did we view Turkey in those days?

DIXON: Well, Turkey didn't get involved in the Cyprus issue very much. It was the British versus us. And we had lots of hard sessions with the British, telling them to get off their ass and have some elections there and get some local government going on. They didn't have to rule the island, but have cities have their own mayors and do anything. The British picked out a labor leader they thought would attract attention, and he turned out to be a weak willy. Their efforts in trying to get their own party started there, these things were so good. We said: What difference does it make, you know, if you just give them some measure of self-government and let them do certain things? Which they were not. The British kept picking them up and interning them and this sort of thing. And we felt that they were being pretty stupid about it. And there's a long series of things in the, you know,...what are those things we put out every year about foreign affairs?

Q: Foreign relations series.

DIXON: ...of memos I wrote about these meetings, that I think give a pretty good insight to what we were trying to do there.

Q: You worked with George McGhee quite a bit, didn't you? He at that time was the assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. What was your impression? How did he feel about the situation that you were dealing with? What was his style of operation and how effective was he within the department, would you say?

DIXON: George McGhee is a very able guy. He has a new idea about every five minutes—ninety percent of them no good, but ten percent of them pretty good. But he's got objectives that he's got in the back of his mind. You know, he parlayed himself into this position. He went to Oxford. He was a geologist and he wrote on a potential oil-bearing shale in Algeria. The French government, I think he saw that they got a copy of his paper on this. They sent him down to Algeria, and they brought in oil. And they gave George some money. George's idea was to make a million dollars by the time he was twenty-five. He came back, and he knew Will Clayton, he got himself a job in the State Department, and then he got this job as assistant secretary for NEA. But, in the meantime, he'd brought his money back from England, bought some property in Texas, and made I don't think a million but three million by the time he was twenty-four and half, or something like this. And then he came in the State Department. He had a very agile mind and was quite capable, though he was very voluble, said too much, pushed too much on the ideas that were not really good. They had a lot of trouble talking him out of things. But I think the overall effect of his reign in NEA was very positive and very good.

Well, I was very much impressed. There was this guy named, I think, Tsouderos, who was sent over by the rightists in Greece, who wanted to go ahead and set up a certain kind of government, which, in effect, obviously, they could control. And they felt that the reaction against the Andartes was such that the Greek population as a whole would have

voted for this in their current mood. McGhee perceived this right off, and he said, “Look, I realize that you feel you can get a friendly vote for this kind of government, which is a bit too strong, it seems to me, by taking the vote right away.” But he said, “I'd like to see really a more measured time, when people would look at both sides of the question before we go into this.” And I thought he showed great perception. He just said this, and McGhee, in responding to it, that was his off-the-hat response. And I think it was very wise.

They did put off elections until things had calmed down some and they didn't have soldiers at everybody's village and that sort of thing. When that didn't go off, they wanted to put off elections for a good while. And finally they did hold elections. And Papagos, who was a general who had been nonpolitical, was elected. In Papagos, we got a government that was fairly moderate. They had effective people in the thing. The old cabinets had been primarily political alliances between the Venizelos and the Tsaldaris parties. Papandreou, who was a very able guy, had this...

Q: This was not...

DIXON: This was the father of the one now.

Q: Andreas is the son.

DIXON: Yes, Andreas's father was prime minister for a short period. And he was a pretty good, level-headed fellow. He was an eccentric. I'll never forget, when I went down to the Peloponnesus, we came past this village and he was making a speech. And I had been to see him. The embassy said, “We haven't had much time to pay attention, it would be nice if you went down and talked to him.” So I did go in and talk to him. We got to this village, and he was making a speech in the village square. So I walked in to sort of see what the reaction was and so forth. He saw me there, and he was very pleased that I'd come to hear his speech. It was only accidental. But he gave me a book that he had written, which he signed. He lived about a block and a half from the embassy, and I saw him a couple of

times after that. He was very pleased that I had taken the trouble to go down to hear his speech.

But, generally speaking, the main political people were the Tsaldaris and Venizelos. They went out. The Greek government, for the first time, began to finance itself in about '52 or '53, and to start paying on their debts, which they had not paid since 1824 when the bishop raised the flag over the fortress in Patras.

We felt that things were going really well. Then Greece and Turkey joined NATO, and we began a more serious effort to help them with their forces. With a different objective—not fighting the Andartes, but to be able to defend that part of Greece.

Q: Well, at that time (again, we're trying to go back), everything was not predicated on Greece versus Turkey. I mean, this was not the focus of balancing these two antagonists.

DIXON: That happened much later on. Greece and Turkey both were being helped. We were advising both of them to take it easy with the other. The thing that brought this on, there was a soccer game between the Italians and the Turks in the stadium in Athens. The Greeks all cheered for the Italians, and the Turks were about to break off diplomatic relations with them. We worked hard on trying to keep the peace between Turkey and Greece.

When they both came into NATO, they were of course allies. Things got even more difficult, because some of the Greek islands, you know, are right on the Turkish coast. And I remember one day the Turkish ambassador came in and said that they were very much concerned that you could hear a cock crow from one of the Greek islands off the southern part of Turkey, and that the Greeks were putting soldiers there, and they were, in effect, putting soldiers onto all those islands. Where they had been all along—well, some of them. There wasn't much Andarte fighting in the islands, but there had been soldiers there. Well, all of a sudden, they became very sensitive to it, and we had a hell of a time

trying to placate the Turks and the Greeks and keep them working in the NATO saddle, so to speak.

The thing that really got this off on a bad footing was Cyprus. I remember, when I left the Greek desk doing work for George Allen, who was assistant secretary after McGhee, we had had Archbishop Makarios come almost every year to the U.N. and ask that Cyprus be joined to Greece. Senator McCarran, from Nevada, had a big Greek constituency there and he was very beholden to Makarios. Before Jack Peurifoy went to Greece, McCarran came with Makarios to call on Peurifoy, to say, in effect, that the Senate would not vote on any appropriation for the State Department unless we allowed Cyprus to join Greece. This made a big impression on everybody in the State Department. It didn't work out that way, but, you know, the warning was clearly there, and McCarran was still pretty strong in the Senate. We had followed a policy of trying to get the British to behave better, to get the Cypriots, through our consulate, through Bill Porter there, to calm down, to take it easy and not do anything rash. We tried to explain to the Turks what we were doing and not to get excited. And we were able to keep the lid on the Cypriot thing.

When I left the desk, they were getting ready for the... Every year, we had this, when the General Assembly came open, because it came up before that, and Makarios would show up, and McCarran and so forth. They said they thought we ought to take a new look at our policy, that maybe we should stand for elections for self-government and so forth and so on. Rather than just tell the British they ought to do it, they wanted to come out.

And I said, you know, here we've tried this for a number of years. And the thing that seems to work best is to keep the wraps on this thing until we can get the British to turn it around. We think, in due course, they may do something. And we think that's the best way to unlock this situation, rather than trying to get it open and try to stand for elections or talks on different things publicly, what we were trying to do with the British.

They didn't take my advice, and they started on a different track. And exactly what I said would happen if they did this did happen. My name was mud in GTI, you know, for being right.

Q: Oh, there's nothing worse. Nothing worse.

DIXON: They hardly spoke to me for six months after that.

Q: I wonder if you could explain a bit, looking back but from your experience then. When you were doing this, you were a civil servant, is this right?

DIXON: I took the 168 exam and went in the Foreign Service. You know, after you've been employed, I think, for two or three years, you could take the oral exam, which I took, and I was qualified for the Foreign Service.

Q: When was this?

DIXON: Nineteen fifty-one, something like that I think.

Q: Well, I was wondering if you could give a feel about how the Civil Service operated within the Department of State before there was a Wriston program and all. Civil Service occupied most of the positions within the State Department per se, except at the very upper level, and the Foreign Service was basically above. Wasn't that the situation there until around '53 or such?

DIXON: Well, all of the major jobs were held by Foreign Service officers. The assistants and so forth were Civil Service. Well, Link White was a civil servant. He was the spokesman for the department. There were very few.

Q: How about the desks?

DIXON: The desks all were held by Foreign Service officers.

Q: Ah. Well, now, you were still within NEA, but from 1953 to '55 you were the political-military...

DIXON: Right.

Q: Working with George Allen?

DIXON: Yes.

Q: What were you doing? What was the main concern then?

DIXON: Well, I handled the NATO program. I tried to develop the Middle East defense organization, which became CENTO. I did all the basic work on CENTO, to even telling the Iraqis and the Turks how they ought to do the treaty. They were getting the treaty all screwed up. And Val Whittington, in the legal office, and I kept sending suggestions—much to the displeasure of George Allen, who wanted to let them do it. We said, “Look, there are certain things, like, for example, this word in here will permit the Soviets to join CENTO, and we don't want the Soviets in CENTO.” And I don't know, there were lots of things that were objectionable in the treaty. We finally got it mostly dressed up. Also Gorman, who was in Iraq, didn't want to say anything to the Iraqis. Most of this was transmitted to the Turks, and they listened to it. And I talked to the Turkish Embassy here and explained that there were serious problems in this thing. I sort of did it on my own and off the cuff. Because George Allen was reluctant to tell them what to do, and so was Gorman. Gorman was an absolute monkey wrench in the works.

Q: He was our ambassador to Iraq.

DIXON: Yes.

Q: What was his problem?

DIXON: I don't know, he was just a do-nothing. Anyway, we got that thing straightened out.

I then spent a lot of time on the military assistance programs. You know, writing up what needed to be done, making the presentation for Congress and so forth and so on. I also did the base negotiations for Greece and Turkey. And I did the beginnings of one for Morocco. I actually did the negotiations myself in Morocco later on. But I did the Greek and Turkish.

Q: With our base negotiations, which later became very controversial because of political developments, did we pretty well get what we wanted?

DIXON: We did, with the Greeks. The Greeks were very cooperative. The Turks were goddamned difficult. And, you see, we used to have extraterritorial rights in Turkey, and one of the things we were asking for was that our military people there would not be subject to Turkish law. And we fought on that for a couple years. We finally had to give up.

Q: Of course, the Turks have lived with capitulations, I think, for a couple of centuries. When the young Turks took over, they weren't about to... I mean that was something that you couldn't mess with. Did we understand that early on?

DIXON: The Defense Department raised hell about this, and we had a terrible time. The Turks absolutely would not hear of it; Defense would not hear of not having it. And that was one of the reasons that thing was held up so long. And the Defense Department finally had to give in.

Q: Were you, at State, and others trying to get across to the Defense Department that we were really up against history?

DIXON: Yes, yes.

Q: This was one of the times when a knowledge of the history and the politics of the country was just vital.

DIXON: A big difference to them. I remember Bud Howard, who was the counsel for the Air Force, was particularly difficult. By this time, Hank Byroade had taken over, and Bud Howard complained to Hank that I was pushing them too hard on this subject. Hank Byroade called me in and said, “I don't know what this is all about, but they say you're being too overbearing and pressing them too hard on this.” I tried to explain it to Byroade, but he wasn't particularly interested. Jernegan was the deputy, so I went in and talked to Jack about it. And Jack, I think, got it straightened out. But it was over this point of extraterritorial jurisdiction. They didn't like my saying that the Turks wouldn't stand for it. And they didn't. But I got sort of a black eye in Hank's eyes from insisting on this.

Q: Well, I wonder, in talking about two people you were working with, both Hank Byroade and George Allen, how were they, both in their style of working in the department as assistant secretaries and also their effectiveness?

DIXON: I thought Byroade was...not much to him. He had been a brilliant young general or something like that, but I think...

Q: I think one of the youngest generals in the Army or something like that.

DIXON: He had so many interests in having a good time. He was mainly interested in, I think, Egypt or something like that. I didn't see him very much; I worked closely with Jack Jernegan. And he had his mind on a lot of other things—I won't say what, but I didn't think he was very effective. I didn't have much dealing with him. I used to go to the staff meetings and, you know, talk, but he rarely ever said anything much.

Q: How about George Allen?

DIXON: George Allen was very, very good. He was, I think, an excellent diplomat and a good administrator. He was easy to work with, he took advice. He was a little stodgy at times. I know...who was it?...somebody who was a deputy assistant secretary under George was asked to go up on the Hill because George had gone somewhere and he had disappeared, and they'd called up and said they wanted to have people up there right now. So whoever this was, after trying to find somebody else, went up on the Hill because the congressional liaison people said they had to have somebody. So, when he came back, he said, “You know, I couldn't find you anywhere, and they said they had to have somebody, so I went.”

George said, “Well, you seem to take things on yourself pretty easily.”

But he forgot about it. I mean, George was sort of miffed because he didn't go up there, because I think he wanted to say something.

But, you know, during my political-military times, Bob Murphy went to talk to the JCS every Thursday morning at eleven o'clock. And whatever the subjects were, they'd bring people from different parts of the department to go. I used to go with Murphy. One day, I went Murphy, and George Allen was there on something else. I've forgotten what it was; it was not a political-military thing. Murphy was then the political-military Under Secretary and liaison with the Defense Department, in effect. We got in there, and Admiral Carney, who was then the member from the Navy, had a terrible prejudice against the British, because he grew up in the Navy where they were inferior to the British. We were talking something about Turkey, and he said, “Well, you know, the British tried to give them something and the Turks just looked out of the window. They didn't want to put up with the British.” And so forth and so on. And somebody said, well, they thought that perhaps that kind of ship would be useful to Turkey. And Carney was very hard on this. And somebody brought in Yugoslavia. Carney said, “Who the hell gave military assistance to Yugoslavia? They ought to be put in jail. They not only give them military, but aid and so forth and so on.”

George Allen said, “I was the ambassador that signed the agreement with them.” He said, “They had given up the Soviets and were cooperating with us against the Soviets. And I recommended and I signed the treaty, and if you want to talk any more about it, I'll be glad to come around to your office and talk about it.” But he put Carney in his place. And I thought Carney was entirely out of place. Of course, Murphy, who would never cross anybody, said, “Oh, well, I don't know that...” And George got pretty irritated with it.

Q: That's interesting. Murphy I always thought of as being a sort of a hard-charging person.

DIXON: Well, in a light sort of way. Yes, when he had to, he brought up embarrassing things, but he avoided anything he could. My experience with him, in talking to the JCS, was he would avoid anything that was sort of difficult. But I suppose he thought, well, Christ, you know, Carney can get this off his chest and that's the end of that. But George Allen was pretty annoyed by it, in addition to the fact he didn't think they should go off with the idea that we had had some Communists in the woodwork who had made us give aid to Yugoslavia.

Let me tell you one other thing I thought was very amusing. We were putting an installation in Turkey, which is very, very highly classified. We wanted to put one there. And I was working on the project. It was the end of '52, just before the Republican administration came in, and there was a guy...what was his name? He was the secretary of defense then. He was Under Secretary and he taken over secretary.

Q: Gates?

DIXON: No, it was something like Foster. Anyway, we had a big fight on this, and we had to take the thing up to him, to sort of decide what Defense was going to do. William C. Foster his name was, I think. We went in to see him, and I explained this to him at great length, what the problems were and this sort of thing, and he concurred in it. But, in the

meantime, the basic telegram that we had drafted was, you know, a hodge podge of God knows what. You know, anything that a committee, so to speak, does, it come out pretty badly. I brought the thing back, we passed it through the channels, through Murphy, to the secretary's office. Of course, the secretary had to agree on it. I got a call from Jeff Kitchen, who said, “Come upstairs quickly. The secretary's mad.” So I went into Acheson's office. He was very polite. He said, “Have a seat.” And he said, “I'm afraid Jeff hasn't done his staff work. He can't explain this to me, and I'm sorry to bother you, but could you go over this.” He said, “There is something in here that has a double meaning and it's ambiguous, and I'd like to get it cleared up.”

I said, “Mr. Secretary, this thing has been written and rewritten fifteen million times. We've gotten the clearances of everybody here on this particular text.”

Well, he said, “I'm the secretary of state, and I'm going to sign the telegram. And if I understand it properly, it's going to go out the way I want it to.” He said, “This is the ambiguity here.” And he read me something, and, sure enough, it was. He said, “What was intended?”

I said, well, you know, what was intended was so and so, but it's been rewritten so many times that's the reason it's gotten to be like this. We were trying to, you know, hedge between this and that.

“What did you intend to say?” he said.

So I said what it was we intended to say.

He said, “Well, that's the way we're going to say it.”

And so they retyped that page of the telegram, he signed it, and it went out.

But, you know, that's one thing that happened there. But, in those days, David Bruce was the Under Secretary and sometimes the acting secretary. I used to get Bruce calling me

on the phone, or get called up to Acheson's office. I think, today, you know, people in that position never get anywhere near that anymore. And, you know, it was perfectly normal; it wasn't anything unusual.

One time, when the Bulgarians took over the islands in the Ebros River, there was a big thing in the paper: BULGARIANS INVADE GREECE and so forth. Bruce was the acting secretary, and he called me and said, “What's this about?” I went up and explained it to him, and said it wasn't terribly dangerous, that it could start a fight, but we hoped it would come down all right.

He said, “It's on the agenda for the White House tomorrow. Will you be ready at nine-thirty, I'm going over there. I want you to come along in case we need you.”

So I went over and sat in the White House anteroom, on the outside. They never did ask me in, but, you know, that never happens anymore.

Q: No, I think we're talking about the growth of bureaucracy, with probably less insight—more administrators and less operators. But then you...

DIXON: Well, you were asking me something about Turkey. When I was in this other thing, I had a lot to do with the Turks because the prime minister came over here with the defense minister. The defense minister was Zorlou and the...what was the prime minister's name?

Q: I want to say In#n#, but I'm not sure if he was then.

DIXON: No. Maybe I'll think of it as we go along. Zorlou, who was a nasty piece of work but a very effective guy, caught on to the fact that I was attending the meetings with the prime minister and Zorlou and their people. And the ambassador had been very nice to me, they asked us to dinner there with different people, and even when I was on the Greek desk, was always very friendly to me. Somehow Zorlou caught on to the fact that I was the

one working on the Turkish military program, which they were primarily concerned about. They were concerned about NATO, about the Soviets, and about acts with the Greeks. Zorlou found out where my office was and came around and talked to me about various things about the program and so forth. Harold Stassen was the guy who was running the military aid and, I think, also the economic aid.

Q: And neutral security or something like that.

DIXON: Yes, yes. And Zorlou wasn't quite sure—he was getting one tune from Stassen and another tune from Dulles—and he was trying to find out various and sundry things so they could make their presentation. I was going to night law school then. Finally, the prime minister wanted to talk to me, so I went and talked to him. I reported all this to George Allen when it was going on. But they were making a serious effort to try to find out things from me and so forth. And I was trying to be sure that I wasn't telling them anything I shouldn't tell them. But we got to be quite friendly. And as we finally wound things up, there was a misunderstanding. Stassen promised them X, and the rest of the government promised them Y. There was this big fight on this. Anyway, they had a final meeting at which we were going to announce what we were going to do. And the prime minister asked me if I were coming to the meeting. And I said, “No, I've got a law exam tonight. I've done everything I can do on it, and I'm going to go on off and study this afternoon.”

He said, “Well, could you come to the meeting and bring your law books and read them there, just in case you're needed to straighten something out.”

So I did that. I sat in the back of the room and read my books. They never called on me, but that apparently made him happy.

But I found that rather unusual, to have that sort of thing happen. And it also made me a little nervous as to what they were trying to find out and what they were trying to do and that sort of thing.

Q: Were you involved in the decision to put missiles, I think they were Jupiter missiles, in Turkey, or did that come a little later?

DIXON: That came later.

Q: Ah. Well then, you were in Rabat, from 1956 to '58, as chief of the political section.

DIXON: Well, that was a very difficult situation. Julius Holmes, whom I had worked with, was nominated ambassador to Iran. He was turned down because he had some dealing with a...he'd bought a ship, a surplus ship, and they said there was something about it. They did not send him there. But he already had a ministerial title, so they sent him to Tangier as the minister, in Morocco. When he was going there, he was trying to get his staff together and he said he would like me to come there and work on the bases.

Q: You're saying Tangier, you mean Rabat, don't you?

DIXON: Tangier.

Q: Tangier was the capital at the time?

DIXON: The diplomatic capital, yes.

Morocco was up in arms and they were fighting for their independence. They obviously were going to get it. It was a question of how we worked it out with the French. And he asked me to come and work for him there, on the bases and about the French and so forth. He went back.

Leo Cia called me and said that they had heard that I had tried to get a job with Holmes, and that they had John Root scheduled for that job, and that I would not go. So I said okay.

Holmes came back and he came storming into my office. He said, “What is this about your refusing to come to Rabat when we go down there?”

And I said, “They told me that I couldn't go, that John Root was going.”

Well, he said, “God damn it, I want you there. The main problem we've got are the bases. You are the expert on the base thing, and I want you there.”

He apparently raised hell and they put me back on it. But John Root and Leo were absolutely livid with me. I said, “I had nothing to do with it. I told him that I did not want to run counter to the establishment wishes in this thing.” Which didn't please him very much.

But, anyway, I went there. And later the Department assigned John Root there anyhow. And, finally, when I came up for home leave, they arranged my transfer somewhere else.

Holmes did not go there, Cavendish Cannon came there. Cavendish Cannon I had worked with on the Greek base rights, he liked me very much, he wanted me to stay there. And the department apparently... Well, he showed me some letters saying they wanted to send John Root down to be the chief political officer. And he said that he would handle the embassy himself and that I was there and that he wanted me to continue in this. But, after Cannon left, they transferred me to Bangkok.

Q: We might as well finish this particular thing. Was this, do you feel, done to show you?

DIXON: I just think that AF had its ideas of what they wanted to do, and they wanted to get me out of the way. But the inspector thought I did an excellent job on this. As a matter of fact, the agreement that I worked out again got stuck on the point of criminal jurisdiction. But the Moroccan government was satisfied with what we did work out. The base commanders were satisfied. I worked out a formula by which we could do this thing. The Defense Department would not accept it. So we simply had the agreement prevail, informally, without ever adopting it. And that stayed for years.

Q: While we're talking about these base right negotiations, I recall, not too long ago, in Italy, that one of the main problems on a lot of these bases is the legal staff in the Pentagon.

DIXON: That's right.

Q: Did you find this?

DIXON: Absolutely.

Q: I mean, they didn't seem to understand the local position or the political realities. Often there are modi vivendi that people can work out. But this seemed to be a major problem. How did you feel about this?

DIXON: It was a major problem. As I say, I got wounded in the process because Bud Howard complained to Hank Byroade, who fortunately didn't know much about it so he didn't get into it. Jack Jernegan straightened it out more or less, but it sort of blackened me and...

Q: But you found this also in the Moroccan base problem, too, did you?

DIXON: The Pentagon would never accept the agreement, although it stayed in effect for twenty years just by local ground agreement. All the base commanders said they were satisfied with it.

And, indeed, we had a case come up. There was a lady, who was married to a seaman, who lived off base, had a baby, the baby cried all the time, and she killed the baby. I went to Ali Ben Jellou, who was the secretary-general of the Justice Ministry. We had already agreed on this thing, that if something like this came up, we would consult, and, if there were no problems, that they'd let us exercise jurisdiction. But if there was something special that bore on Morocco's situation, they would want to exercise jurisdiction

themselves. I explained to Ali Ben Jellou what this was, and I said, “This woman is off her rocker, obviously, no sane woman kills her child.”

And he said, “It's okay with me, but we can't do this unless the chief justice” (of the Supreme Court, in effect, who was French) “agrees to this.”

Well, I had known him socially, and so I called him up and said, “I've got a difficult problem to talk you about, and the Moroccans are looking to you to give an answer in this.”

So I went to see him. He was very agreeable. And I said to him, “This woman is crazy.”

He said, “There's no doubt about it.”

And I said, “What we want to do is get her back home to a psychiatrist. If there is something criminal that she can be prosecuted for, it will be done, I promise you. But we think this woman needs psychiatric attention.” And so forth. And they agreed to it.

So I thought, after this, the Pentagon would relax, but they didn't. They kept insisting that we ask this. So all the base negotiations were simply adjourned from then on out until Phil Bunzel came. Then we started giving up the bases. But, in effect, we kept people there until 1975, I guess. And that agreement stayed as just sort of an informal agreement. That's what we stood by. Which I negotiated and which the inspector thought was a terrific job.

Q: What was the political situation in this period from '56 to '58 while you were in Morocco?

DIXON: The Moroccans were mainly guided by two people: Ahmad Balafrej and... God, what's his name, Allal-el-Fassi, well, he was sort of an ideological Muslim thinker, plus some other people who were sort of tough people, like Boucetta, who was one of the principal people in the Istiqlal independence movement. There were some others, but the

two important people were Balafrej and Boucetta and...I don't know why I can't think of his name.

In any case, there was a guy there with a contract for the New York Times, who kept intervening. And all this time neutrality was beginning to come, and he was trying to tell them that they should adopt a form of something like neutrality, non-dependence, I think they talked about, which he fostered with the Moroccan government. They were torn between saying we had falsely negotiated with the French about the bases, which was a super sin, and therefore we had to renegotiate this thing. But they would not get into negotiations. Or, actually, we had formal beginning, in which Ambassador Cannon, the present king, myself, and two or three other people got together. We had a formal opening. Nothing happened for months. And it was after pressing very hard I finally got the negotiations started. So that thing took a long time in getting started. I guess we negotiated for about a year until we got to this, what in effect to our base commanders, to us in the embassy, and to the Moroccans was satisfactory.

In the meantime, one of the major problems was the presence of the French. There were squabbles and fights between the French and the Moroccans all along. And the French tended to, if they had a post out somewhere, to come... We had these stations, I've forgotten what they're called, that have transmitter towers and you can send an electric...

Q: Oh, LORAN stations, I think.

DIXON: No, not LORAN, it was a telephone station, and they had towers and they could transmit from one tower to the other, so that we had telephone connections in all these posts around Morocco. And I used to get calls from posts, saying, you know, we hear the French have been in a firefight with the Moroccans, they've come out of their posts, they're coming into outposts, and what the hell do we do? I'd go up and talk to Francois Chalroux and the French...what was he called? Anyway, in effect their ambassador there. He had been the governor-general. And we gradually moved those people out of the posts. But

that was a frequent occasion of conflict that we found very difficult, in trying to go between the French and the Moroccans and to keep them away from each other's throat. Which one of our main policies was to try to get through this period, get the bases negotiated, keep the French and the Moroccans from each other's throat, and try to keep doing other things that were considered very important to us.

One of the things was to measure the noise of the outer ionosphere. And we had to put in machines in several places. What they were trying to do was to correct maps to say where things were. And they were trying to what the hell, I don't really remember it much now. But, anyway, I went to the Foreign Office. And I suppose I had to get out a dictionary to find all the words in French to tell them. And I suppose it must have sounded like absolute gibberish to them. The man got the giggles as I was saying we want to put this thing out in the desert here so that we could measure the noise in the outer ionosphere. But they finally went along with it.

And there were other projects like that, that we wanted to continue to do. And, you know, they were always suspicious that we were just trying to close down on them with more and more functions and that sort of thing.

We also got into the Algerian fight pretty badly. Unbeknownst to us, a first lieutenant, who was a supply officer at Site Eleven, which was a base and an air landing strip north of Rabat, had been in contact with the Algerian rebels. Well, actually, the middle guy, who was pretty important, was Mohammed Laghzaoui, who was the minister of interior. Somebody had put together this lieutenant and Laghzaoui. He was ordering supplies: ammunition, broadcasting stations, God knows, buildings, you know, these broken-down buildings.

Q: Yes, prefab.

DIXON: Prefab buildings. And these were all going to the Algerian rebels. And nobody knew what was in Nouasser, because the thing was something like twenty square miles

or some twenty-mile perimeter or something like that. And they had no idea what was on that base. They had been accumulating things from the very first down there. And this guy would go down and order these things, turn them over to Laghzaoui, who in turn would sell them to the Algerian rebels. Which I thought was pretty unpatriotic for an Arab to sell to them, but he was making a fortune out of this.

I said something to Laghzaoui one day about, you know, what is going on? He said, “Well, I know what is going on. If you can stop your side, I can stop my side.”

Much to my surprise, the legal officer from the Air Force headquarters there came to see me and said, “We've arrested this lieutenant.” (That supply guy.) “He's been going to this whorehouse regularly, and we thought, you know, there's something funny. He's married and got a family and so forth. And he was getting so he was going about every day to the whorehouse to see this girl named, in effect, Lucky. And when we arrested him, he confessed to stealing things from Nouasser.” They wanted to question him about why he was going to the whorehouse.

Then we got the whole thing, where it was just awful what he had given them. He told us what he had given them. And, you know, at this time, the French were in a terrible fight with the Algerian independence movement. And things were very tight between us and the French at the time. I talked with the ambassador. I said, “I think we've got to tell the French about it, because it's probably going to leak out. And I think we've got to tell them first.” And he agreed. I suggested that he talk to the top French guy.

So I went to see Francois Charles-Roux, who was sort of my opposite number there. He turned ashen white. He said, “Absolutely, this must not get in the paper. I tell you, it would raise all sorts of hell at home. And we've got to keep good relations between the France and the United States.” And so forth and so on. So he said, “What can you do about it?”

I said, “Well, we can see if we can get this guy transferred to, say, Podunkville in Arizona, at an Air Force base there.”

So I went back and we sent a telegram home explaining this and asking that they talk to the Defense Department about doing this. And I also talked to the chief general there in Morocco, who said he would cooperate with it, and he sent it to his people. So we got that guy out of there. And the word never leaked out.

Q: That's remarkable.

DIXON: Of course, Laghzaoui knew the operation had stopped. He said to me one day, “What's happened to Lt. X?”

I said, “He was given twenty-five years in prison.”

“Twenty-five years!” he said. “My God, you don't give them twenty-five years for that, do you?”

And I said, “Well, hell, he stole a fortune. Yes, I think it's probably equal to what he stole, in terms of punishment.”

But we had another terrible incident there. There were aircraft carrying atom bombs, who were constantly on the alert in case we were attacked. There was a plane that hit something. I've forgotten whether it tipped over. Anyway, something caught the plane on fire. The people tried to put it out, but they couldn't put it out. And the plane started burning up—and the atomic bomb. So they sounded a retreat for everybody to get out of the base.

While this was going on, another plane had landed. They went into the hanger, and they said, “We evacuated the base.”

“Was it a practice evacuation?”

“No,” they said. “We evacuated the base. An atom bomb is burning. Get in the Jeep and get out.”

So they drove out, and took the wrong turn, and ended up in Petitjean, which is not terribly far from there. And they didn't know where they were, and they couldn't speak anything, and they were just sitting there. They were absolutely lost. And they were trying to find a place where they could telephone. Some lady offered to help. She said, “What's the matter?”

They said, “Well, there's an atom bomb burning on the base that's going to go off.”

Well, she immediately went to the police chief. The police chief called Boucetta, who was the secretary-general of the Foreign Office.

I was just going to lunch when the telephone rang and Boucetta said, “What is this about an atomic bomb burning in Sidi Slimane?”

I said, “I don't know anything about it. Never heard of it. I don't believe it.”

“Well, we've had a report from the...” He told me what happened.

So I called up there and I got this guy, McDowell, who was the deputy commander of the base there, and he told me what happened. He said, “There is no danger, however, it's just going to burn up. There may be some fissionable material around the plane there, but it's not going to hurt anybody.”

Anyway, I went and got Cannon and we talked about it. And then I went up to the Foreign Office and explained to them that the thing had burned out and that nothing had happened. I don't know whether there was any fallout from it, but anyway it didn't blow up.

And we were trying to keep this from the newspapers if possible. The Moroccans weren't saying anything about it, but that goddamned New York Times correspondent there heard

something about it. And a big to-do over it. We had to go up and dig up that place, take all the stuff out, then take it out to sea and dump it or something like that. I think they had to fly some of it out. But, anyway, we got rid of the evidence. We redid the runway and everything went back to things as normal.

At that point, there were no Moroccans on Sidi Slimane. But this guy caused one of the other ministers, who was not one of the leading ministers, to raise the question of, you know, what was the military command. The administrative command was in Madrid, but of course there were two commands: the Nouasser command and the command of Sidi Slimane, which had the other thing, plus the naval command. So there was no real thing, but they trumped up something saying that African Spain was in command of Moroccan forces in Morocco, and that this was an insult to their independence, and they made all sorts of to-do about it.

I would see this New York Times guy, who lived across the street from the minister who did this, and he said, “He's the one who's telling me all this.”

I said, “I'm perfectly willing to go over and talk to him.” But he wouldn't receive this. I said, “With you, I'd be happy to go over and talk about this.” But we never did win that battle. He sort of won the battle from lack of being able to much about it.

We also had some pretty tough times. We had revolts against the French in Rabat and Mekn#s. The one in Rabat was when Ben Bella was coming through Rabat.

Q: He was the Algerian rebel leader at the time.

DIXON: Yes. Well, we didn't know he was coming through Rabat. But I got an invitation from the Foreign Office to go down to Hassan for a party. They introduced me to a whole bunch of Algerians, one of which turned out to be Ben Bella. They didn't tell us until afterwards that he was Ben Bella. But we were very friendly with them, we thought they were just Algerian citizens. We were a little curious as to what was going on.

But, anyway, the next day, the Algerians plus the Moroccans went off in planes to go to Tunis to try to negotiate something. The French captured the planes. And I then learned from the Foreign Office that that guy that I'd talked to was Ben Bella.

We knew something was going to happen, so we called over to command and said, “Bring people in the base, get them off, get out of the way.”

My wife wanted to go to the grocery store. I told her not to leave. Jack Williams' wife, he was administrative officer, called Frances and said she was going to the grocery store, would Frances like to go? Frances said I had said not to go out. She called Jack, who said there was nothing wrong, and so she picked up Frances. They went out into the street and got caught there by a mob that tried to turn the car over and burn it up. But some French troops came in and got them free and they came back. We were stuck at home for about three days.

There were terrible massacres at Mekn#s, and I went up with one of the king's principal military advisors to try to see how things were and to see if the American colony were okay and what else was going on.

Q: Today is December 4, 1990. This is the second session of an interview with Ben F. Dixon. We were discussing, in our last tape, about your time in Rabat, when you were there from '56 to '58 as the chief of the political section. One of the questions that I did not ask would be: What was your impression at that time, and, you might say, of people in the embassy, of King Hassan?

DIXON: Well, my impression wasn't so good. He was a young man. I first saw him in our initial base negotiation; he was part of the Moroccan team. He obviously didn't know anything about it—he said nothing in the opening session. After that, I carried on the negotiations with Ali Ben Jellou, who was ambassador here, he was the secretary-general of the Ministry of Justice, and various members of the Foreign Office. We got

into negotiations pretty heavily. I hired an interpreter who could interpret into Arabic. The Moroccans were very sort of nationalistic there and they wanted interpretation into Arabic. It broke down to Arabic-French in due course.

But we reviewed for months various proposals that we had for the agreement. We were able to come to agreement on almost everything except criminal jurisdiction. The criminal jurisdiction question, the Pentagon insisted on having complete criminal jurisdiction over any American military in Morocco, without any exception. The Moroccans, who had just gotten rid of extraterritoriality, insisted on being able to try everybody who was American.

We finally worked out to a point that the American government would have jurisdiction over the people on base; and off base, they would be subject to Moroccan jurisdiction, with a formula that said that we could ask the Moroccans for a waiver of jurisdiction over certain persons if we had good reason to do so. This was arrived at with great difficulty and in consultation with the base commanders.

When we finally came to an agreement on this, we sent it off to Washington. And, although we had all the rest of the agreement agreed to between the Moroccans and the embassy, the fact that they had not gotten full criminal jurisdiction meant that we never got the agreement completed. That is, the Pentagon would not accept the agreement. And they just kept putting off doing anything about it.

In the meantime, because we had to have some sort of operating process, we informally agreed with the Moroccan government that this agreement would prevail. And, to my knowledge, it prevailed until about ten years ago—never signed, never formally adopted. We kept some sort of representation there on the military side up until about...well, it was still there when I was there in 1976. And the general terms of that agreement were still holding.

This took a great deal of my time, and it was without much real support from Washington because of this question of criminal jurisdiction. However, the base commanders were perfectly happy.

As soon as we agreed to adopt this informally, as between the embassy, the bases, and the Moroccan government, we had a lady, who lived off base, kill her baby. She was an American. I went to the Foreign Office, and they said, well, they understood. I talked to Ali Ben Jellou, he said he understood, but they'd have to get in touch with the chief judge in Morocco, who would have a final say in this thing. I went to see him and tried to explain to him that we thought this lady was out of her mind and we wanted to send her back to a mental institution in the United States. He sat and listened very carefully, never showing any sort of indication of what he thought at all. When I finished, he said, “We're so sorry that this has happened. Obviously, she is crazy, no woman tries to kill her own baby. Take her on out.”

So I thought that that showed goodwill on the part of the Moroccan government and that the Pentagon might relent, but they never did.

Q: The legal department of the Pentagon really has no feel for the overseas environment whatsoever. But back to the king. He was fairly young at that time. I was wondering just how did we feel about his survivability, his effectiveness and all. He was pretty early on in his reign.

DIXON: I saw something of him. The Forrestal came into...

Q: That was an aircraft carrier.

DIXON: Yes, came into the Mediterranean. And we invited him and, in fact, his brother, Moulay Abdullah, to come and visit, and they accepted. I was in charge of arrangements for him to go up there. I used to go to his palace, which was on the backside of the racetrack with a private entrance, to talk with him. I rarely ever was able to catch him. Why

they made appointments every morning, I don't know. But when I got there, there were people asleep on the sofas and a couple of babes around. He was, at that time, I think, shacked-up with Emilie Cashoux, who was a French starlet. I'm told she's the mother of some of his children who live in France. I sort of felt he was pretty spoiled. We finally were able to make arrangements for this thing, but not much cooperation on his part.

However, I ran into him one time up in the mountains near Sefrou at a hotel there. I was there with my family, and he came in, in a silver-plated Jeep. I recognized him and went over and spoke to him and had a chat with him and went out to his Jeep with him, and he was very friendly and amicable.

However, when we went aboard the Forrestal, we were supposed to meet at eight-thirty at the airport, at Site Eleven, which was an airport just north of Rabat. We had a COD, one of those planes that transport... for an aircraft carrier. We all got there a little after eight. Eight-thirty came and he didn't show up. He finally came in a little before nine, I think it was. We were very anxious because the weather was not too good; we wanted to get going. He wandered in, in some funny little tight shoes, some tight trousers, you could see every muscle in his body, and some jacket that looked like... They were very stylish to have short jackets then. He looked like hell. And his brother looked liked they had awakened him and he was still asleep anyway.

We got on the plane, whereupon Moulay Hassan wanted to fly the plane. I talked to the pilot, and he said, “Well, why don't we work on this on the way back. Tell him that he can help fly on the way back and he can sit in the copilot's seat. You know, we can work this out.” So I explained that to him and he wasn't very happy with it. He looked sort of disconsolate, but he accepted it.

We got to the aircraft carrier, made a landing, got off. There was a Marine guard lined up for him to inspect. He realized he was supposed to walk down the front of the line. There was a young lieutenant who was the commander of the platoon that was being the honor

guard. He walked down the front line, and then went to the back line and started down to walk in front of the back line. Well, you're not supposed to do that. You're supposed to inspect the back of the soldiers in the first line, and then do the second line, and then do the back of the next thing. I was in the Marine Corps, I knew about this. Anyway, I was amused because the lieutenant realized what he was doing. He was walking with a sword, and he put his sword down and got the crown prince on the behind and just pushed him right over behind the other line. He caught onto it and went down the back of the line and did the other thing right.

The king's photographer, who was a very close friend of the king, was with us. He used to send him along with those boys all the time, I think to keep an eye on them, obviously. But we went down into the admiral's cabin, and they had some coffee and, you know, something to drink. And Moulay Hassan said to me, “What is this? This couldn't be the quarters of an admiral and the head of an American fleet, is it?”

And I said, “Yes.” It was a nice cabin, but it was not big.

“Well,” he said, “I just can't imagine.”

The photographer came over and said, “Tais-toi!” (Shut up!)

And he shut up. But he never really put himself out to be very nice.

After lunch, we went up to the...what do you call that? the tower.

Q: The conning tower.

DIXON: Yes, whatever it is. We went up there to watch a demonstration of bombing. They'd have a plane take off, and then they'd fly by the ship, turn upside down, and drop their bomb as they turned over, you see, and go back this way. Well, all this, of course, everybody was sort of nervous about it. The planes would come in awfully close to the ship

to show this, and they were going to great trouble. Moulay Hassan said, “I want a Coca-Cola.”

So I said to the yeoman who was there, “Could you get the prince a Coca-Cola?”

He said, “Sir, if I get one, it's way down in the bottom of the ship. If I go down there, I've got to bring it back and the ice is going to be melted when I come back.”

So I explained this to Moulay Hassan.

Q: Moulay Hassan was the crown prince or the...?

DIXON: Yes, the crown prince. Moulay Abdullah was his brother.

Q: I see. But Hassan at that time was a crown prince, he was not the king.

DIXON: Yes. Well, the king did some fancy business and had Doulevah name him as crown prince. It usually doesn't work that way, they decide themselves. But he dictated it.

Anyway, I explained to him. And a little later he said, “Well, go on, tell him to go ahead and get the Coke. I don't care if it's watery.” But before he could get back with it, we were finished there.

But, you know, those kind of things I thought were infra dig for a royal prince. I mean, he was essentially a spoiled child.

I remember when they had Youth and Sports Day. And all the young people from around the countryside and Rabat and so forth gathered up at the palace. We could see from the embassy, you could see inside the palace wall and what was going on there. There was a crowd, packed to the gills, on the edge of the road. Moulay Hassan was supposed to go and talk to the..., you know, at four. He never turned up until about four-thirty. And he had one of those little MGs. It was not paved in there, it was all dirt. He started that car up,

went through that crowd, and threw dust all over them, going at about 50-miles-an-hour. And I thought, you know, that sure isn't going to make a very nice impression on the youth that's up and coming in Morocco.

Q: Well, sort of was the impression then, at that time, that one way or another he wasn't going to be a very effective leader if he lasted very long?

DIXON: Well, I don't think that part. His father was not very old, and it looked as though there would be many years before he ascended the throne. Nobody foresaw that he would be in there in a couple of years.

Q: His father was assassinated, wasn't he?

DIXON: No. He was with was a French doctor that had a clinic up there. He went in for something very simple and suddenly became dead. Of course, there was the rumor that Moulay Hassan had him killed. I don't know, there are a lot of mean tales that go around, I doubt that that's true. No, he was not assassinated, he died very suddenly, with what was thought to be a minor ailment. It was after I left.

I thought the king was going to take him in tow. I know, when they came over here, Bill Porter came over with them. They stayed at Blair House, and Bill went to get them one day. He said he wandered upstairs and that he saw somebody telling Moulay Abdullah the king was ready to go, come on, get dressed. Moulay Abdullah was still lying in bed and said, you know, he'd be along in a minute or something like that. And the king came by and saw him. They went and turned him over with the mattress and threw him on the floor, told him to get his ass up and get dressed right away. So I think he was trying to rein those boys in and make them be more responsible. I think they pretty much did what they wanted to. I think the king was very busy and maybe he didn't do as much as he wanted to, but clearly he was trying to get them in tow.

Q: Well, then, we'll move you. You left Rabat in 1958, and then you went to Bangkok, where you served from 1959 to '62. What were you doing there?

DIXON: Well, my personal job was being liaison officer, or US representative to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. I was given that job primarily because Bill Porter, who was back, head of...

Q: This was Ambassador William J. Porter.

DIXON: Who had been the DCM there. I had just come into the Foreign Service. Well, I had just come into the field for the first time. I had been in the Civil Service and qualified under that...what is that program?

Q: Wriston program, I think, wasn't it?

DIXON: No.

Q: Mustang program, or...

DIXON: ...five, ten, eleven, or something like that. After so much time in the Civil Service, I took an oral exam and was qualified for this. I wasn't brought in until the time of the Wriston thing, but I did that thing about a year before that. And they apparently held up, I don't know why. Oh, yes, I do, because, well... In any case, Bill Porter thought that I had never had the economic experience, and he kept telling the Personnel people that I should be given economic jobs. This also involved this problem with John Root. They wanted to make John Root the head of the political section; the people back in the department had wanted this right along. So I was shunted off to Bangkok.

The Asians at that time were at the beginning of this great opening that they have reached today. But they were just beginning then, and they were very hopeful that the United States would help them develop their economies and get started. A lot of that

representation was done through ECAFE, which was the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. And then they had meetings on all sorts of specialized things, like petroleum and Customs and...I don't know, they must have had fifteen or twenty different seminars every year on special aspects of economy and of governmental functions, you know, sort of a training thing. And they'd put out these detailed things about how you, for example, conducted a Customs Service and this sort of thing.

I was completely immersed in this. The embassy had no interest in this whatsoever. Alex Johnson was the ambassador, and the economic counselor had no idea of what I was doing. They began to ask me to do other things, but I said, “You know, I think there's a job that needs to be done. I was sent here to do this job and I think I should be supported in doing this.” There wasn't much response to it. And I found trouble in getting my things sent out. You know, they'd let them stand for a week before they'd be signed and that sort of thing. And I found it very difficult to try to get along.

Q: Was this just one of the things that has often been leveled against particularly the older Foreign Service, that things of economic or commercial interest just didn't grab their attention as much as...

DIXON: They paid absolutely no attention to it whatsoever. I spent a lot of time out there talking to people to see what they wanted to do on all these different sections, and what they planned, and informing the department of this. There was a section of the department very much interested in it. And if I could get my dispatches out, or my telegrams out, which... There were great delays by the economic counselor.

Q: Who was the economic counselor?

DIXON: Claude Whittington—didn't know what I was writing about, didn't even send them up to Leonard Unger, who was the DCM, who would simply let it sit there for a long time before he would sign it or do anything. Sometimes he'd want to talk about some

minor point, but he'd hold it there for a couple of weeks before he did it. And Ambassador Johnson just had no interest in it whatsoever. I felt pretty annoyed about this.

When the inspector came, I told him I thought that either they ought to let me do these things alone or give it immediate attention.

This annoyed Whittington considerably, and he began to denounce me as not being very responsive to leadership and so forth. I'd never had anything from him at all, except he'd want me to do some things, and I had, say, a delegation there, we were doing something, and I'd say I couldn't do it.

The result was that the inspector wrote a nasty report about me, which I resented very greatly. It, in fact, was primarily untrue. They had some professional inspector, named King, there, who didn't write his report until several months after he got back. It was shot through with all sorts of error of fact, error of judgment. But it certainly didn't help my career very much.

Q: No, no.

DIXON: Anyway, I enjoyed... Once I got into it, it was an entirely different kind of thing than I had ever done before. And I think they had great confidence in me.

Q: You're speaking about the...

DIXON: The ECAFE.

They also assigned me labor reporting in Thailand, which I resisted. But Alex Johnson finally insisted that I do it, so I did it. But it cut into the time on the other thing.

I had some interesting times. They were trying to start the Asian Bank at that time. I felt that it would be a great help in dealing with the Asians, if we could afford it. Therefore, I wrote dispatches recommending that the Department consider this thing very seriously,

and consider doing some basic financing for it. They eventually did do it, but they never showed much of a willingness as long as I was there. Shortly after I left, they began to take on to it some. But I felt that it was a very important thing for the Asians.

We had quite a few delegations and quite a number of high officials—the Under Secretary of commerce and Under Secretaries of a lot of departments—that came out to these things. I was able to talk them and try to explain what ECAFE wanted to do, what these countries needed and that sort of thing, in hopes to get widespread interest, throughout the agencies of the US government that dealt with these sort of things, for the problems in East Asia. Sometimes they'd stay two weeks, sometimes delegates would stay a month, but those were good times to do briefings and talk with them.

One thing that was rather funny. The ECAFE had an annual meeting. One time it was in New Delhi. This was just when Kennedy had come in. I felt that it was important to get somebody of standing to come and talk to the economic ministers who came to these meetings. I saw that Harriman was probably going to be the EA assistant secretary, so I sent a telegram back saying: Would it be possible for Harriman to come to this and talk to the economic ministers individually and sort of get familiar with our problems? I thought it would be helpful in his job to know what their problems were, as well as a good chance for us to make some time with somebody who was important in the administration to talk these people. They never answered this thing until the last minute. When I got to New Delhi, they said he was coming.

Funny thing, we had a guy who said he'd worked for Harriman. And he said, “Mr. Harriman will want to make a speech, so I'll write a speech for him.” So he wrote a speech for him. Harriman came. At the first delegation meeting, this guy said, “Governor, I've written a speech for you.” And Harriman picked it up and looked at it, opened the second page, read a couple of lines, third or fourth page, tore the thing up and threw it in the trash basket and never said anything, which I thought was one of the rudest things I'd ever seen in my life. Well, he was pretty bad.

He said for me to gather all the economic ministers together and he would address them. I said, “Governor, the point of your being here is to talk to each one of these guys individually and to listen to what they have to say.” Well, he wasn't going to do that. And I said, “Well, this is what you're here for. And I hope you will do it, I'd hate to have to report back that you are not going to do what you came here for.” He looked plenty goddamned mad, but he said all right, he would do it.

So we sat—each minister, and Harriman, and myself. The first meeting we had was with the Afghan minister. Harriman said, “I'll just write out my speech that I'm going to make, while I pretend to listen to what they're saying.”

I said, “You know, it doesn't make any difference to me, but please hear enough of it to be responsive.”

Harriman was sitting there. He was talking and writing a couple of words and things. And all of a sudden he took the hearing aid out of his ear. It was sort of loose. He pulled the cord in front of his ear. I reached up, picked it up, and stuck it back in his ear.

He was a terror. He was terrible.

But we did get through all the economic ministers. I think he was pretty annoyed with me, but nonetheless...

We had two other things that happened there that were quite important. The Lao foreign minister, Kampan Panya, came to me and said... I had been in Laos.

Q: What was his name again?

DIXON: Kampan Panya. He came to me and said, “Souvanna Phouma is here at the Ashoka Hotel.” And he said...

Q: Who was then the...

DIXON: Well, he had been prime minister and was thrown out. And he had stayed quite a while with Sihanouk in Cambodia. Kampan Panya said, “Listen, he's on the other side of the fence from me, but nonetheless I think the Americans ought to go in an show him some attention. At least call him and have something to say to him. You never know when something else may happen and you'll want to be in his good graces, too.” Which I thought was pretty good, coming from the foreign minister. So I went and got Carol Laise at the embassy and wrote a telegram, and she sent it to...

Q: Carol Laise would have been, at that time, the political officer at the embassy in New Delhi.

DIXON: She sent a telegram off. I said, in effect, please authorize somebody—out of the embassy, or Harriman if he comes, or myself—to talk to Souvanna Phouma. We got no answer. Two or three days went by. Harriman still hadn't come. So I went to my British opposite number and we went over to his embassy, and I told them that Souvanna Phouma was there and that my government had not responded to it, and I thought maybe it would be a good idea if they went over and had a chat with him, which they did.

I knew him, slightly. So I hung outside his door until he came out, and went over and spoke to him and sat down and had a chat with him.

Finally, Harriman arrived. Souvanna Phouma was on the way to the airport, so we dispatched Harriman out to the airport to catch Souvanna Phouma just as he was waiting for the plane to go off, and he did get to talk to him. But, you know, it was sort of a last-minute thing. Harriman later put great store in the fact that Souvanna Phouma was friendly towards us, but of course a lot of groundwork had been laid before that.

Q: Well, this is about the time when Laos all of a sudden became the area of concentration of the early Kennedy administration, and particularly Averell Harriman. We're talking about 1961-ish, '62-ish.

DIXON: Yes, that's right. But Harriman was awful goddamned slow in getting out there. We tried to say, you know, he's on his way, get out to the airport. And Harriman finally went, but he dawdled a lot before he went. I don't know, maybe he was tired or something. But I think he's a pretty sorry character. I had a lot of contacts with him which were the same sort of thing.

Another thing happened which I thought was interesting there. There was an Indian who was said to be a stringer for the KGB.

Q: The KGB being the Soviet secret police.

DIXON: Yes. My opposite number was in fact the head of the KGB in Bangkok. He was the top KGB agent. I'll tell you about him in a minute.

This guy was very friendly with him, obviously very friendly with him, but he was also doing some sort of...I don't know what. He was doing some task for the KGB, our CIA people said.

Q: This is the Indian you're talking about.

DIXON: Yes. When we were in Delhi, I was approached by this Indian, who was fairly high in the Indian Civil Service, who said, “The Soviets are going to make an attempt to have the Lao delegation thrown out of the conference, saying that they don't represent the true government.” And so forth. There had been a change in government. I've forgotten exactly what it was at that point, whether they had forced they way in or what it was.

In any case, I went and told Kampan Panya, “They are going to try to unseat your delegation and I think you ought to get prepared for it.” I said, “I've gotten this through an Indian source, but it sounds fairly reliable to me.”

The thing that was difficult, as far as I was concerned, was the fact that if he was the KGB setup, it seemed unlikely he would tell me the truth. But it just didn't fit at all, so I figured he must have had a spat with them or something and was going to get even with them. So I told Kampan Panya, and I sent a telegram back home, and we were all prepared when this thing came.

And, in fact, it came very suddenly. But we were all prepared; we had already talked to other delegations and so forth. And we very quickly turned it around. We had made enough contacts and so forth, so that they said okay, we... this and they seated the Lao delegation of Kampan Panya.

The other job that they gave me at the embassy was because there were a number of Soviets in ECAFE, in the staff as well as this guy Victor Leziovsky, who was the head of the KGB there. I was in constant contact with them. You know, this was still during the Cold War. They had one officer from the embassy who went to their parties and talked to them and reported on them and that sort of thing. So I was given the job, which was fairly easy because I'd see these people out at the ECAFE headquarters as well as other places. So I reported on the Soviets there.

I got in great, detailed discussions with them. They were very excited at that time by the fact that Khrushchev had come to power. They said he was the new Boris Gudonov; he was going to turn the government around and get rid of all this Communist crap and so forth and so on. Which they told me individually—a number of them, even the deputy chief of mission, who I'd gotten very friendly with in one of these discussions. It was perfectly clear they welcomed him and they wanted a reform in Russia and so forth and so on, and they had thought the Stalin days were over.

I did a fair amount of reporting on this and got a fairly good insight into how these Soviets, in this mission at least, which I think in different ways were representative of different runs of people in the Soviet Union, how they do things, how they think about things, and what they were hoping for and so forth.

Well, that about winds up what I did in Bangkok.

Q: One thing, you were talking about your dealings with the Soviets. How did you work with the CIA on this? I mean, because I assume they would be very interested in what you had to say.

DIXON: My deputy was a CIA type, and I worked very closely with him. Well, I reported. They didn't have much to say. They were pretty closed about it, but they got a little less closed. They didn't keep it into their chests. But they were, at first, not very informative. As I told them things, they began to sort of tell me about what was going on. My deputy, as a matter of fact, tried to get one of the Soviets to be subverted. And, well, a big to-do. The Soviets sent a note to the Secretary of State, objecting to his activity and so forth. And I think, for a while, they thought I was a CIA type. They all seemed to know each other well.

Q: Well, you know, there are tee-shirts today in Washington which say: "KGB and CIA, together at last. We cover the world." But did you find that the CIA operation at that time, I mean, obviously the KGB and the CIA are in there, were they promoting what you were trying to promote? I mean, I'm talking about our CIA. Or were their activities sort of a hindrance to our trying to further the economic development in there?

DIXON: They were trying to get things... For example, they wanted to build a model of the Mekong. Apparently, in deciding how a river's going to react, you can build a model and run water down it and one thing and another. The other thing is to do it by computer. You can do it by computer. The Soviets were prepared, through ECOSOC I think it was, to give the institute in Phnom Penh where they doing this work under ECAFE on the Mekong

Authority, a computer model. I felt that if they did this, they'd be pouring more Soviets in there to run the thing and to do all this, and I figured what we ought to do was to try to beat them out on this. So I wrote the department about it. They reluctantly finally came along, and we did put something down there. But it was very difficult to get them to act on this.

However, with the Soviets, we were in contest with them. They also had an ECOSOC meeting there in which there was a great political to-do over seating delegations and objecting to people and God knows what, in which the Soviets showed their orientation pretty closely. We fought with them there.

In other things, we were cooperative. At this time, though, the Chinese and the Russians were being split asunder. I used to refer to the Chinese as their Chinese cousins, which used to irritate the hell out of the Russians. They didn't like that.

But I got along fairly well with them. And they were fairly open, after a while, about things, projects that they were interested in, projects that we were interested in. And we were pretty careful. You know, if it was a project that they could not really object to, we would discuss it with them. If it was something we'd think we'd get into competition, we didn't discuss it with them. But in general we were trying to find out as much as we could about what they were going to do, as well as to find out what they were particularly interested in, and try to warn our government about the things they wanted to do.

Q: Did the early stages of our involvement in Vietnam play much of a role in what you were doing at that time?

DIXON: Yes. I was up and down in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam quite a bit, as well as Australia, Indonesia, and Singapore, about various and sundry things. I figured, you know, what could we do to try to bring Vietnam on our side? We had this Mekong development. And, you know, we at that time were trying to have peace with the North Vietnamese.

The war had not gotten to the stage that it later got onto, and it was still possible to do something about this.

I therefore wrote a dispatch recommending certain projects, which the North Vietnamese obviously couldn't participate in the Mekong thing, and suggested that we use these things as bait to try to interest them and join the Mekong, stopping the war in effect.

President Johnson used this basic idea in a speech at a college to propose this. But the Vietnamese would have nothing to do with it.

The other thing was that I knew the president of Vietnam. Also, there was the guy, Wolf Vladijinsky, who was...

Q: He was the very famous advisor both in Vietnam and in Japan, too.

DIXON: Yes. I was up in Laos on special duty when the incursion came in from the north. Wolf was there then, I got to know him. And he got to telling me about how bad things were with Diem and his family and all of those secret organizations and so forth. Later, while I was in Vietnam, he introduced me to Diem. And I got into the conversation, saying, in effect, you know you ought to get rid of Madame Nhu.

Q: Diem was the president, and Madame Nhu was his sister-in-law.

DIXON: Yes. And I had occasion a couple of times after that to talk to him about it. He clearly was aware that it was a liability to him, but, on the other hand, he apparently seemed to think that all this organization and so forth that they had was really important to his support. There wasn't much I contributed to that.

There was some resentment against Diem. There was a rumor at an ECAFE conference that Diem had been deposed. The Vietnamese ambassador rushed over to me and said, “What is this? Have you heard?”

I said, “I don't know, I can go over to the embassy and find out if there's anything.”

And I went down and found it wasn't true.

But they didn't know what the hell to do. They heard that somebody else was taking power. You know, they wanted to be on the right side. And a great, great to-do.

And finally, when we got this thing straightened out, he acted as though nothing had happened, but I think he was getting ready to try to throw his weight on the other side.

I went down on an inspection of the Mekong, and we went down to look at something in Can Tho. There was of course fighting in there, but it wasn't very great.

Q: This is in the Mekong Delta, Can Tho.

DIXON: Yes, and we took a look at this thing. We were riding in Jeeps, and there was an Army truck with some soldiers in it that sort of went with us. It was an area where there wasn't any fighting to speak of. But on the way back, somebody started firing, and they stopped that big truck. The driver said, you know, it made him nervous to sit there. And I said, “Well, I agree with you. I was in the Marine Corps, you don't ever let yourself get caught while you're just sitting like a duck somewhere. Either let's go back or let's go in to Can Tho.” So we just drove around that big truck—with some difficulty, they didn't want us to, but we went on into town. They didn't get out of there for hours after that. But they sat there, of all stupid things. That was my only encounter with that down there.

While I was there, this incursion into Laos came. The Pathet Lao had come into the north there. They needed people up there and I went up. John Holt, who had inspected me in Rabat and thought very highly of my work, asked that I be assigned up there. And I stayed up there nine months. I drove back and forth to ECAFE things, and then went back when things were quiet.

But I did two things there. One was that we borrowed the United Nations mission to take a look and see what was going on. I had worked with UNSCOB on Greece, when I was the assistant Greek desk officer.

Q: What was this?

DIXON: United Nations Commission on the Balkans. And I knew generally how it was organized, so I explained to them, and we did the basic preparations to set up for a mission there. A guy named Jilliard, I think, who was from the U.N., finally came out there. But he didn't know much about this either.

We also had to see about getting aircraft that could get people up to that high level up there where this thing was going on. And I got the Naval attach# and we talked to the people in the Navy channel to sort of figure out what sort of plane we could use to go up there. We finally found the only kind of plane we could use. Helicopters wouldn't do very well. But the landing place there was in the shape of a “U” cut out of a mountain. And you had to come in, turn around, and land on a very short strip. So that you could not get more than about two or three planes in at a time. The only plane we could use was a Canadian plane named something like a duck or something like that.

Q: An Otter, I think. There's a Canadian plane called an Otter.

DIXON: Otter, yes. And you could only take a few people up there.

When we were organizing for this, the minister of defense asked that I come out and talk to him. I went in there and sat down and expected him to ask me a question. And he said, finally, “Well, what do we do?” And I explained to him how UNSCOB had been organized and what we ought to do, and that we ought to send people up there to take a look around, we ought to interview people and explain how the mission should work. And generally I worked on...

When the mission came, we had a great guy, a Japanese who was on the mission, who had been Mariel's handler in Istanbul during World War II. But he was an active guy and got out and did things. The son of the president of Tunisia was there, but we couldn't get him to do anything.

Q: Bourguiba.

DIXON: Bourguiba, Jr., yes. They were the two outstanding ones—Bourguiba for not doing anything, and this Japanese, whose name I don't remember right now, who was very good and very active.

Anyway, they went up. We got the aircraft in and everything worked fine. And they did the interviewing and finally got up a pretty good report on it.

The other thing that I got involved with there was, there were two Gudden brothers who had an airplane, who rented their plane and flew commercial missions for people. They had been down to...I've forgotten where they'd gone to, but they had stopped, because they were low on gas, at a field they saw in Indonesia. Well, they landed there, and it was the CIA field that they were trying to build up, or outfit, to get rid of Sukarno. They had a terrible time with the Indonesians and, I guess, the CIA getting out of there.

But they finally got out, and they got up as far as Laos and they ran out of money. They got a contract with a local guy, hauling something from Cambodia somewhere. They were just bags of things. They finally realized they were hauling opium. They refused to do it anymore. Don Corli, who was a Corsican living in Laos and running dope out of there, took over the planes. I went down to the Lao government and told them to give the planes back to the owners. And, after long representation, they finally did.

This Don Corli, however, was still doing a lot of things, and they were trying to find out who the hell was supporting this thing.

The Lao ambassador to India came there, went down to the Banque D'Indochine (the French Indochinese Bank), and did some transactions. I talked one night to somebody, and I was asking about him. Something made me think that he was somehow involved in this. So I went down to the Banc D'Indochine and talked to some people there. And I found out that the Indian ambassador was sponsoring Don Corli and that he, of course, was very closely tied in with the prime minister.

This absolutely sent Horace Smith, who was the ambassador, wild, because he [the prime minister or the ambassador?] was the principal supporter of the Indian ambassador and apparently must be getting some rake-off from this thing that Don Corli was doing. And that explained why we had so much trouble in trying to get this thing straightened out. It was very interesting. But the CIA had been unable to find anything about it. And I guess it was just by accident, in talking to one of these Lao who said something that gave me the idea that he might be tied-in to the problem. And I must say that, for bankers, I was surprised they would tell me as much as they would tell about him.

Q: You left your job in this and all in 1962, and then you were moved somewhat over geographically. Could you explain what job you had and where you went. You went to Pakistan from '62 to '65.

DIXON: No, I think to '64. I was there for three years. Well, Bill Rountree, who was the ambassador, asked for me to come and be his political-military assistant. Which I did, and I was the sort of secretary of the country team and did odd jobs for the ambassador. He left and McConaughy came. He was essentially an EA man, and he was, I think, completely lost about anything about the subcontinent.

Q: He had been ambassador to Korea and then assistant secretary for EA and didn't get on too well with the Kennedy people and, I think, was sort of moved out of the area.

DIXON: Well, I don't know what it was, but he sure seemed ill at ease. When he first came there, I had a big negotiation going on with the Foreign Office about the terms... What the problem was, the...now I can't even think of the name of it... It started as MEDO, Middle East Defense Organization, and became the...well, the Baghdad Pact.

Q: Was this CENTO or SEATO?

DIXON: CENTO.

Q: I mean, there were two. CENTO was the Baghdad Pact.

DIXON: Right, CENTO. SEATO was for East Asia, the same thing as CENTO was for the western side. The major preoccupation of the Pakistanis at that time was India—Kashmir, part of the Punjab. And, you know, the fact that Pakistan was divided and situated on both sides of India. There were problems in the east and in the west. But they were entirely preoccupied with India. They therefore felt that CENTO should concern itself with the threat to Pakistan from India. The Pakistanis insisted that the terms of the treaty call on the United States to give help to Pakistan. Actually, the treaty said that if they felt they were subject to a threat, they could consult all the other members of CENTO, and what would take place would be whatever they decided. But they felt their obligation to consult with this also implied an obligation to do something about it, and therefore they were trying to push this.

And I spent almost my whole time with CENTO affairs. Our political problem was this question of India and what we would do. We finally got to the point that they felt that the provocation was so great that they called for a consultation.

Now McConaughy did not know really what the treaty provided. It was pretty finely defined. I reported this, and he and the rest of the country team wanted to say that we turned this down out of hand. I told them that that was not true, that we had to respond to this, and, if they insisted, respond affirmatively if we wanted the thing to go on. They sent a telegram,

in which I did not agree, saying, in effect, that this was beyond the scope of the treaty and so forth and so on. We got a telegram the next day saying, in effect, what I had been telling them.

McConaughy never seemed to care much for me until this point. He suddenly began to realize that there would been a lot of things I'd advised him on that he didn't particularly like. He didn't like what was said or he didn't remember what it was about. But I used to go to the Foreign Office with him. For example, when he first came there, we had seven points to make to them. I gave a very simplified thing to Mr. McConaughy. He obviously didn't have enough background to take them in. And he said what he said, but then he said, “Now, Ben, why don't you go on with this,” and I said the rest of the points. It was pretty clear to me that he was not very much at home in this thing. So that I tried to advise him on a lot of these things when they began to come up. He didn't like it too much. But, after this incident, he listened to every word I said.

Another thing was that I used to talk a lot with, in effect, their chairman of the joint chiefs of staff who was there in Karachi. He was sort of a sarcastic fellow, but I began to realize that he was telling me, in effect, that they were getting more friendly with China. And I came back and I said to McConaughy, “You know, I don't know whether this is just him talking or what it is, but he clearly to seems to be implying that they are getting closer to the Chinese.” So I wrote a couple of telegrams on what this said. He toned it down considerably, but just had enough of a hint in the telegram. After this went on for a couple of months, Mohammad Asghar khan told Bill Hall, who was the DCM, that they were going do something with the Chinese. They had been wanting to do this because of their preoccupation with India.

I also worked on the military assistance program, which General Ruland didn't like very much. We had a hell of nice general there at first, and I worked very closely with him. I did all the write-ups asking for what we wanted to do with the Pakistani forces, the

explanations and the justifications for these things. General Ruland was very particular. He said, “I guess you seem to be the chief of the MAAG, not me.”

And I said, “Look, all I'm doing is writing up the political side. You tend to the military side, and I'll try to defend what you think militarily should be done.”

Well, I got along fairly well, finally, with Ruland. Ruland came and complained to the ambassador about me, and the ambassador told him that I represented his point of view, you know, and just to be more amenable. So that came around. But Ruland felt I was running the military assistance program. Which I was not. I was simply trying to get him, as I did with the other general, to give me the military stuff so that I could write up the things to get...

Q: How were we seen? In the first place, I don't want to leave the Chinese thing yet. When you arrived there, Pakistan had not had relations with China, is that correct?

DIXON: Well, I think they had an ambassador there, but I can't remember. The relations were not very close. But you see, in the meantime, the Chinese invaded India.

Q: Did this take place when you were there?

DIXON: Yes.

Q: What was our reaction to this from that vantage point?

DIXON: I had to explain to them that we were helping the Indians because we did not want the Chinese in there, and that we were really trying to defend the subcontinent. If the Chinese came in there, they might do things also to the Pakistanis. You see, they have a slight border with China, in Sinchung I think it is. It's not very accessible, but they eventually got a road through there, you know.

Q: How did the Paks react to this?

DIXON: Pretty bad. I can't remember exactly, but they were not close with them. But when they invaded India, and when this thing drew back, the Pakistanis were very satisfied that they had bloodied the Indian nose. You know, they came way down, and then went back. But we made great efforts and I spent a lot of time at the Foreign Office explaining what we were doing in India.

Q: We became very close to India at that point.

DIXON: Yes. Well, we had always been fairly close to India. But we were trying to help them there, and the Pakistanis resented it. As I say, I spent a lot of time explaining what we were doing and that it was not stuff that could be used against the Pakistanis.

And, as a matter of fact, I got into discussions with a guy named Yahya Khan. A Marine general that I had served with came in there, and I had long discussions with him about the possibility of how the Indians and the Pakistanis could fight each other.

Q: We're looking at a map right now.

DIXON: You see, all this is desert down in there. Amritsar to Lahore, there's a possibility of an invasion across that area. But there are lots of obstacles in there, and anybody with a good...

Q: This is between India and Pakistan.

DIXON: Yes. Anybody with enough of a force in that area could quickly come in. It was no easy job to send anybody through there. And, you know, later they did start across there. But, just as I had figured out with this general, the probability was that they would not be able to get through.

I explained this to Yahya Khan, the threat perhaps in Jammu and Kashmir, and sort of small fighting elements, but that no major attack could come through there. The only place

was down in the Amritsar, Lahore area, which with sufficient force they could stop, and therefore there was no real threat to West Pakistan. East Pakistan was different, but there was not much information on the East Pakistan front at that time. Those problems came up later on.

We had a lot of flare-ups in Pakistan, resentment against the United States, particularly when we'd help the Indians. There were several times that there were riots against us, particularly up in Rwalpindi and up in the north country.

I used to go up a lot to Peshawar to talk to Mohammad Asghar khan, who was head of the air force but who was a very important member of the government, so to speak. He was a very bright, a very able guy and was sort of a favorite of Ayub, who was the president. The guy who was head of the army, who was a sort of senior Pakistan military type, was a very nice dunderhead. I didn't take up much time with him because there was no return on it. But Mohammad Asghar khan and Abul Khan, who was head of the navy, I saw a great deal of and talked with about all these problems.

Q: Were we trying to fine-tune our support for Pakistan? I mean, did you and the embassy have the feeling of really working to fine-tune the support for Pakistan as opposed to India? What were our relations with our embassy in New Delhi? Did you have the feeling that they weren't understanding your problem?

DIXON: The department, NEA, was very pro-Indian. They had Ken Galbraith as ambassador. They had...oh, God, what was that guy's name who was very pro-Indian? And we were getting the short end of the stick.

Q: Ball or somebody like that?

DIXON: No, it wasn't Ball. Ball was very level headed. I talked at some length with Ball. Ball came out and somebody told him that I was the guy to talk to, and he got me off, up in Rwalpindi, and I spent a number of hours with Ball talking about things. I'm just trying to

think of that guy who was the assistant secretary there. In any case, we tried to talk to him. And Bill...what's his name, Dean Acheson's son-in-law? His brother was Jack Kennedy's national security...

Q: Bundy.

DIXON: Bill Bundy was very pro-Indian.

Q: You're probably thinking of Phillips Talbot, who was the assistant secretary at the time.

DIXON: Phillips Talbot was very pro-Indian.

Q: And Bill Bundy was...

DIXON: Bill Bundy was the defense assistant secretary. What were we talking about?

Q: You were saying that Galbraith was very pro-Indian. He was ambassador to India. And Phillips Talbot was pro-Indian.

DIXON: And Carol Laise. Carol Laise had come back and was now head of the office.

Q: Of Subcontinent Affairs. Looking back on this, was this localitis on your part, too, and the people in Pakistan? Were we being objective about this?

DIXON: I thought we were not objective about it. I thought that they had localitis on India. The Kennedy administration, I think, in particular with Galbraith... Galbraith, I think, succeeded in having the US government go all out for India, particularly when the incursion came. We felt we understood what they were doing.

Q: You're talking about the embassy in Karachi.

DIXON: Yes, or at least me, in the embassy. I felt that we understood everything they were doing in India, but that meant that we ought to do an equal amount or at least meet their requirements.

One of the things that the Pakistanis wanted was a submarine, because West Pakistan has no energy source and they get it all from the Persian Gulf. The best defense against submarines or, for that matter, surface ships, is a submarine. Therefore, the Pakistanis wanted a submarine to monitor the sea between their source of energy and Karachi, where they brought it in. They had been pushing this for a long time.

Bill Bundy had objected to it because he thought it would alarm the Indians. The Indians, in fact, knew that the Pakistanis wanted one, and were very much opposed to it.

We were having a big conference over Kashmir. Duncan Sandys and Averell Harriman were in Delhi, separately.

Q: Duncan Sandys was the British foreign minister.

DIXON: Or was he defense minister?

Q: He was in and out of the thing, but anyway he was the British representative.

DIXON: Yes. Harriman had been there and had tried to settle this Kashmir thing. But he came up for a long discussion with us, and we had lots of discussions with him. Bill Bundy was also there. And I had been down with General Ruland, who was the MAAG chief, and Bundy talking about this program, and I said, “I want to make the case for the Pakistani submarine.

Bundy said, “That's out. I don't want to hear a word about that.”

And I tried to say...

And he said, “I don't want to hear anything about it. We're not going to talk about it.”

Anyway, later on, Harriman was sitting up with McConaughy. I had something to take up to McConaughy, and Harriman said sit down, tell me about so and so and so and so. And I was talking to him when Bill Bundy came in. When I finished, Harriman said, “Is there any outstanding request the Pakistanis have that we haven't met?”

And I said, “Yes, there are a number of them, but I think the most important one is the submarine.”

“Well, what about the submarine?”

So, with Bill Bundy there, I gave the whole case for the submarine, and he said he thought that it made sense. I don't think they ever gave one finally, but anyway we got even with that son of a bitch Bundy. I at least was able to get a hearing at court.

But we had great difficulty with Harriman. He embarrassed me to death. I belonged to the Singh club, which is sort of the Pakistan club there of the old English colony plus the Pakistanis who were sort of high and mighty. And they knew Harriman was there and they asked if Mr. Harriman would come. The met every Saturday morning and had a drink at the bar there, and sort of exchanged talk and one thing and another. And they had raw oysters, which is very unusual there, but somebody knew how to get them somewhere. Anyway, I spoke to the governor and he said why, yes, he'd be pleased to do it. When is it? I told him. He wrote down a note. Saturday morning came and I went by to pick him up, and he said, “I'm not going.”

And I said, “Governor, I've told them that you are coming and they know that you've accepted this thing. It'll be terrible, because they've already got a big crowd there to see you. They want to see you, they're fans of yours, you should go and talk to them.”

“No, I will not do it.”

I said, “You gave your word you'd do it, and they expect you to come there.”

I was very annoyed with him, and he began to get sort of edgy. I guess I shouldn't have insisted so, I think maybe he would have come around. But he refused to go.

He said, “Bring the book over, I'll sign the book.”

I said, “They don't give a damn about whether you sign the book, they want you there.”

He never would go. It was very embarrassing. I went back and said that something had come up and that he was terribly busy, he send his regards and so forth. But it was very difficult.

Also, one night at dinner (we kept having meals together at McConaughy's), we had General Adams from Panama, who was head of some great force that could fly around the world and do things, and several generals there.

Q: A quick-reaction force or something like that.

DIXON: Yes. And that son of a bitch who was ambassador to Turkey for a while, I've forgotten what his name is now, but he turned up somewhere.

Q: Komer? Let's look up Turkey.

DIXON: Yes, yes. Anyway, we went to dinner, and there was a very acrid discussion going on between the pro-Indians and the pro-Pakistanis. And Bob something this guy was named. I don't know what he was doing there, I think he was in defense.

Q: Robert W. Komer.

DIXON: Bob Komer, that's it. He was a nasty piece of work.

Q: Known as “The Blowtorch” by some people.

DIXON: We kept getting into these fights, and Komer told Harriman something, and Harriman said don't you tell me what to do, so and so and so and so. And they were about to jump at each other's throat. Somebody got Komer settled down. The telephone rang, and they came and said that they wanted Mr. Harriman on the telephone. I told Harriman, and he said, “Go and see what it is.” So I went and it was Duncan Sandys. He said that they had had some more discussions with Nehru and that they were thinking of proposing so and so and so and so, and could I get the governor to the phone. I said, “He is involved in a very active discussion, but I think maybe I can get him here.” So I went back. He said no, he wasn't leaving the table. “What did Duncan Sandys say?” So we stopped everything to tell what Duncan Sandys had said. Then I had to go back and tell him what Harriman said. And I kept going back and forth and back and forth, which I thought was very rude of Harriman to do that. I mean, after all, Sands was the British foreign secretary.

Well, as you know, nobody ever got anything settled on that. No proposals really working or anything. It was just a mess.

The other gentleman that came was named Porter, who looked like a schoolmarm. Adams could do nothing but talk about shooting and hunting, and Porter always talked about protocol and administration. How the hell those two guys had these big commands I do not know. Porter was head of...I don't know, some big command.

Q: Well, now, did you feel that in our trying to give the British our good offices, that our good offices were pro-Indian regarding Kashmir at the time?

DIXON: Without any question. Without any question. And Bill Bundy was one of the main ones. And Phillips Talbot, the assistant secretary. Carol Laise was head of the office. Dick Sneider, who was our political counselor.

Q: Richard Sneider?

DIXON: Yes, who saw which side his bread was buttered on, was practically selling out to Pakistan just because he wanted to be in good with Talbot and Carol and so forth. He was very unadmirable afterward.

Q: Looking at it at that time, because we are going back to this period before '65, how did we in Pakistan, our embassy and you, view the "Soviet threat?" I mean, what did we feel about it?

DIXON: Well, that's what we were trying to tell the Pakistanis, that that was what the real threat was.

Q: Was there? I mean, did you really feel that there was a threat there?

DIXON: Well, sure. The Soviets always have been interested in Afghanistan. And, as you see, Afghanistan is only a thin line between Pakistan and USSR. Furthermore, traditionally the Soviets had tried to come down through these valleys that led into Peshawar, the Khyber Pass.

Q: Yes, but still, thinking about that, I mean, we talk about a thin line, but we're talking about the Himalayas and all that. It's not the greatest country to do anything in.

DIXON: No, they could come through there. Don't forget that the Vietnamese War was going on and we were having threats from China and Russia in this way, and a threat from Russia this way. That's why the Indians were kissing the Russians.

Q: Well, then we saw this as being a real possibility, as far as the Soviets moving into Pakistan.

DIXON: Our official policy was that, yes.

Q: But how did you think about it?

DIXON: I thought it was less pressing than our official policy. However, I didn't feel in any way that I should do anything other than stress the threat. And it was a realistic threat. The Soviets had all sorts of installations down in that area. We had installations in Peshawar which listened to what was going on in the Soviet Union. The Soviets up around Peshawar were always trying to claim they were Americans trying to find this place. And you know, the U-2 and all that. We had all these installations up around Peshawar.

But, you know, there's a valley down that little thin line of Afghani territory between Pakistan and Russia, and it is possible to come down through there and into Pakistan. It's difficult, but, you know, with aircraft and so forth you can come across. It's not logistically a difficult thing to do.

Q: Did you feel that the Pakistanis were in any position to do anything? I mean, was the military aid we gave usable and being positioned so it could probably be used against the Soviets?

DIXON: In West Pakistan, yes.

Q: So, when we gave them aid, we felt we were getting some value for it rather than everything going towards the Indian side. Or at least it could be transferred back and forth.

DIXON: Yes, we were getting a lot of inflation out of it. You see, the Indians wouldn't let us do any of that kind of thing. But, with all of our very secret listening devices, we could track everything the Soviets were doing electronically. Satellite monitoring and all that kind of thing was done primarily from Pakistan. And it was pretty important to us at that point because we didn't know exactly what the Soviets were doing.

Q: Well, shall we move on to your next post? Is there anything we haven't covered, do you think?

DIXON: I don't really know. Different things suggest other things.

Q: You were there when the Johnson administration came in. Did you see any change? President Johnson had made a rather famous trip, as vice president, to Pakistan and all. Did you have any feeling that there was some sort of a more equitable balance in that time?

DIXON: No, no. I don't think it changed any. I think we were too frightened about China and India to really make much of a change, although we continued to depend on Pakistan for very vital information. Because, you see, it's situated just under where the Soviets were doing a lot of this stuff.

The only other thing I think of in Pakistan was that I had a disease of too many red corpuscles, and I had to go to the hospital quite frequently for treatment. In the course, I found there was no blood bank in Pakistan, and also that they had a whole bunch of blue babies, about a hundred of them, in the...

Q: Blue babies being the designation for infants who are born not getting enough blood to them because of heart problems.

DIXON: Yes. So I talked to a doctor friend who told me about an outfit in California that did operations on blue babies. They were connected with a hospital that was there. They authorized him to see what he could do about it.

We tried to see if we could get AID to give us some money to do open-heart surgery on these babies. They said it was not worth the money, that by inoculations they could save more lives than a hundred blue babies for much less cost. They didn't want to get into it.

I suggested to the chief of the hospital that he write to President Johnson and tell him about the problem of the blue babies and ask if a team from his associated hospital in California could come out and do this. Which they did. Johnson answered affirmatively.

But we had no blood bank there. We had to have a blood bank, so my wife and I helped the hospital start a blood bank there. We worked on it some, and when we got the blood bank up, the team came out and they operated on all of the blue babies. All of whom were successful except one grown man who had been a blue baby. The doctors were not anxious to operate on him because he did not respond to things they wanted him to do, and they thought after the operation he would not—it was painful to cough—he would not cough up the things that he had to cough up to pull through this, and they said they thought he had a poor chance anyway. But his family insisted. And he died, but he was the only one who did.

But that was sort of an interesting... that we got into.

Q: Oh, it certainly was. Well now, you then, in 1965, I think it was, or '64...

DIXON: I came back to the United States. I had been assigned as consul general in Ismir, and I had come home for home leave to go to Ismir. When I got back to the United States, they said that the deputy director of the USIS had been given the post in Scotland and that he didn't like that. He thought it wasn't any responsibility to it and he wanted another post. They asked him what post he wanted, and he apparently settled on Ismir. So they threw me out of Ismir.

I had not taken much home leave. I had a lot of home leave, so I stayed home in Raleigh for about six months. And then I came back and went to some school that John Stevenson wanted me to go to.

Q: This was at the Foreign Service Institute, probably, mid-career or something like that.

DIXON: Yes, and I had French lessons. And I was appointed to Tangier and went to Tangier.

Q: You were there from '65 to '68.

DIXON: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in Tangier during this period you were there?

DIXON: Well, there were several problems in Tangier. Tangier had been a free city, of course, and the whole Northern Zone had been Spanish, where the Spanish participated in the government of what they call the Northern Zone. The Spanish did not do like the French, which was to have straw men technically running the government that was run by the French. The Moroccans ran the government in the north, and in Tangier it was run by an international commission. Tangier was a free port. Everything had plenty of money.

They had been through the war, in which they had a tough time, but they made it through by doing foreign exchange both for the Germans and the Allies. That's where they kept alive during that time.

But when the independence came, for the first time, the southern Moroccans in effect took over the northern Moroccans. They came up there, but they brought the French advisors. And, for the first time, northern Morocco and Tangier were subjected to French control through the figureheads that had their French advisors come along and run the country.

Well, this was very unsettling in Tangier. And, by the time I came back there as consul general, things had gotten in pretty bad shape. Economically Tangier had gone down. The rest of the country paid no attention to the Northern Zone. It was not developing; it was going backward economically.

And I thought I'd try to help them get two things: to get more attention of Morocco's resources to the north, and also to try to establish our relations with the people there, because our embassy had practically no contact with the whole Northern Zone of Morocco. So I started making trips out, meeting the caids and the governors of the provinces and that sort of thing.

Q: Caids being equivalent to the mayors, I guess, wasn't it?

DIXON: Yes, yes, yes. And reporting on what was going on there. I found, for example, a particular caid had just been put up there and not given enough money to do the job that needed to be done. He was pretty sore about it. He used to tell me all sorts of secrets about what was going on in the government and that sort of thing.

Another fellow, a guy named Dickey Byrd who was a homosexual, had some very close friend in Morocco with whom he was associated. He was very smart and ran a tourist business, a car business, a travel business and that sort of thing for a rich Moroccan family. He got all sort of gossip from them that he would tell me. And that way I found out about how Ben Barka was killed, which displeased the embassy very greatly.

Q: Could you explain, Ben Barka was...

DIXON: Ben Barka had been one of the foremost figures in the liberation of Morocco and had become the speaker of the legislature, in effect. He was pretty radical. He was also born on the same day as my wife, so they said they were great friends, having been born about the same time on the same day. Ben Barka went to Paris. He disappeared there. He was found by Oufkir and a guy named Dlimi, and they had tried to get him to do something, I don't know what it was. They were pretty annoyed with him, and they beat him up some and pushed him down some steps into the basement. He fell and died, and they had burned him up. Which I reported, but this angered the embassy considerably. There was a big political problem...

Q: Why did it anger the embassy?

DIXON: Because it was obviously the doing of the government of Morocco, which they were not anxious... Henry Tasca was primarily concerned...

Q: He was the ambassador.

DIXON: He was the ambassador. He was primarily concerned with being the Moroccan proponent in the American government.

Q: This is almost endemic to our ambassadors to Morocco, isn't it? I mean, it happens an awful lot.

DIXON: Yes, well, they are very friendly to us and they are very supportive, and it's easy to fall into that. But that was considered to be, you know, a lack of the... Well, and truly, in fact, it was true. Oufkir later tried to kill the king. Dlimi...I don't know what he did, but he became dead on the highway, supposedly in an automobile accident — which was arranged. But both those guys, they should have taken note of that early in the game and realized what was going on. I think the king wanted to get rid of Ben Barka. And I think they wanted to get rid of him because they wanted to take over the government; they didn't want Ben Barka in their way.

Well, that was one of the big to-dos up there. But they were great heroes of Abd el-Krim, you know, who was the...

Q: The Rif.

DIXON: The Rif fight against the Spanish. It was the French who finally came and helped the Spanish put it down. Abd el-Krim died and he wanted to be buried in Morocco. And they brought him back and they buried him there, very quietly. But then the Muslims have the thing they called Abayung, which is when they get together one month after the person is buried and have a sort of a memorial service. Well, the government didn't want this to go on, so they put interdiction in the roads to stop people from coming to it. The caid told me about this. There were some fights going on and the government finally knocked them down. But they had no idea this was going on, down in Rabat. The caid told me about it, I reported the thing, and Rabat was furious about that.

Q: Well, could you explain a little about the relationship. Most of the time you were there, Henry Tasca was the ambassador?

DIXON: Yes, and he tried to present...

Q: By the way, I served four years under Henry Tasca in Athens. But I wonder if you could explain how you saw his operation and how he dealt with the consulate general, from your vantage point.

DIXON: He was very nice to me and always very friendly. But his DCM and political counselor were very anxious to try to do what he wanted to do. And he wanted to present the shiniest, brightest picture of Morocco possible. Therefore, when I reported these kind of things, they thought that was being unpatriotic. And they were the ones that raised hell about this. Then Doros came up to see me and said, “You know, we're going to have you just report on these things to Rabat, and we will report what is necessary back.”

Q: Who was this?

DIXON: Leon Doros. He was the DCM, a man who was afraid of his shadow whom Tasca asked to come out there but in whom Tasca had rapidly lost faith. And Doros was always trying to bring somebody else... he caught hell from Tasca from. I always got along fine with Tasca when I was with him and I explained things to him. But he let them talk me into sending my dispatches only to them and letting them decide what they ought to send on.

John Root came out, who was then the head of AFM, and he said, “We haven't heard much reporting on this from you.”

And I said, “Well, I've been sending it to Rabat and they haven't been sending it on.”

Well, he said, could he take a look at all these things, and so I gave them to him. And he said he'd like to send some through the pouch. He took all these things and sent them

back to Washington. And he said, “Would you send us a copy of all the stuff you send to Rabat?” And so I did that.

But we had lots of things that went on up there. Another thing I tried to do was to get the king up there to see...

Q: This was now Hassan? He was no longer crown prince, but the king?

DIXON: Yes. And I sort of pushed Henry Tasca to get him to go. And I...

Q: This was sort of presumptuous, trying to get the king of a country to go to a part of his own country.

DIXON: I guess so. But things were in pretty bad shape. And, you know, we had serious problems. But let me go on with this. I'll tell you about the other problems that came to us because of this.

I got the governor up in that province, the governor of Tetouan, and another guy to try to bring pressure down in Rabat, in addition to Tasca, to get the king to come up there. He finally came up there. I helped the governors make up a list of things in all this general area that needed attention, which we knew through the AID mission and through things people were telling me about what they needed to do. We got the projects sort of lined up.

But of course they were all scared to death of the king. The king would just cut somebody's head off without thinking twice. They were all scared of him and they didn't, I think, press very hard.

But he went and looked at these things and saw them. And I thought, once he saw the sort of state of things, that he'd want to do something. He never did do anything about it. He made a speech saying he was going to do this, that, and the other, but he didn't do anything.

But, you know, I thought one thing was very indicative, and that was, I went down to meet him, with all the other consuls general and the governors of the areas and so forth. He got out and he didn't speak to anybody. He simply got in his car and drove on up, and we followed.

I was about three-quarters of a block behind the king. All these crowds were out there, who were pretty silent. When I came up, they were sort of looking at who it was, I'd wave to them, and they'd all cheer. They were cheering me, but they weren't cheering the king. And I think they were cheering me simply because I waved to them; I don't think they particularly knew who I was. But I think the king paid no attention, he just rode right through like he had taken a taxi to get to the train station in a hurry.

The thing was going pretty fast, but by the time it got out to me, it was going slightly slower. There was a man that threw himself in front of the king's car as it passed, making a turn at a corner, and that got everybody uptight. The guy was trying to say that he wanted to touch the king and he wanted to bow down before him. And I don't know exactly what it was, but the security hustled him off pretty fast. And that, I suppose, made the king tense.

But, anyway, it was a sorry show. He went fast up the street and, I mean, he should have waved to the people, but he didn't.

What the problem was, we just had tons of Americans coming in to Tangier to get kief, which is marijuana. We just had the jails full of these people. What would happen was, they'd get a taxi because they wanted to get some kief. They'd get in the taxi and they'd ride down to the market and they'd buy some kief. The taxi driver would tell the police, while he was out negotiating. The police would stop the car. He had put the marijuana under the seat or in some crack. The police would search the car, find it, and put him in jail. They charged him for not buying kief from the Regis du Tabac. They have tobacco in Morocco that has kief in it, so you could get it. None of these people knew this, of course. They'd charge them for violating that. They'd charge them for trying to hide the stuff,

resisting arrest and so forth. And so they had certain fines. They'd bring them in, fine these things, and they'd paid it, and let them go.

But the people who didn't have any money were in trouble, and they'd beat them up. Sometimes they would take them down to the scene of the crime if something...I don't know why. But somebody out on the beach would call up at our consular office and say that some guy is screaming, the police have got him and they are beating him up and he's down at such and such a beach. And we'd try to get somebody down there to see what it was. ...American citizen called the consulate and so forth.

So we'd try to monitor this. We never could get our fingers on it. The police chief, named Ben Abi, we used to call the Old Fox. I would see him socially, and I'd say, “Look, would you please check into so and so. You know, a guy went down from the consulate and... and they had gone, but apparently the people there say that he was being beaten up by the police. Would you please check into this?”

“Oh, certainly, I'll check into this. We'll not have any of that.”

Finally, some guy came up and the consular officer called me and I went down to see him. He pulled down his pants and he had, on his buttocks, a blue line right across it. He said that he had been in there and they had taken rubber truncheons and beat him on the buttocks, just constantly, until it was so painful he couldn't stand it. They had also held his head under water until he began to breathe-in water, and then they'd resuscitate him. He was just terrified.

So we took pictures of this. I went down to see Ben Abi and said, “This guy, without any question, has been beaten by your police.” And so forth.

“Oh, we'll certainly not have any of this at all.”

He didn't perform, so I went back to see him and said, you know, “What about this?”

He said that perhaps they had done it, but he'd gotten rid of that officer and there would be no more of that stuff and so forth.

And the things did go down some, but we kept pushing on it. But we had no end of Americans who were being beaten up by the police there. And we finally got it down.

I wrote a dispatch saying the Northern Zone depends almost entirely on kief. They can't grow anything else. There's nothing done there. And what happens is, the government supervises the bringing of this stuff down and they take a part of the crop. Whoever that local official is, he brings it into Tangier and they sell it to the merchants there. The merchants sell it in the market or they sell it overseas. And it's the main source of living for all these people that live in the mountains, and they're having a tough, tough time of it.

And I said I think what we need to do is to get AID to put some programs in to, say, grow berries, like blackberries in... Mountain area, to grow rice, to grow bagasse, which makes sugar. And I had found a Cuban guy who had left Havana and started some sugar fields in Louisiana and other places. He came visiting there and he showed an interest in doing bagasse out towards the end of my consular zone. Anyway, I suggested a number of projects that they might help do that to let these people make a living and to get them to stop growing kief.

Nobody paid any attention to it until they started having a special group on drugs. Somehow they went through a computer and found this thing, and then they used this as an example of what ought to be done to help an area where this sort of thing goes on. But they never did anything in Morocco, and nobody paid any attention to it.

Q: Were you able to warn the young people coming there not to do it, not to come?

DIXON: We did the best we could. But, you know, we didn't know where they were. They'd come in by ferry from Spain into Morocco, and, you know, they'd bring in two or three hundred people to come in by plane. No way we could keep up with anybody. And Tangier

is a great place for sexual intercourse, for drugs, for drinks, for restaurants—everybody has a great time there. And the Moroccans all fawn to this, they enjoy all the same things, and it's just a Good-Time-Charlie place. Everybody knew about it, and everybody came in there.

But later I got a letter of commendation for having written this dispatch, about three or four years after the thing was over, after they used this as an example. But, you know, they paid no attention to it at the time.

I also tried to get people to make movies there. A guy named Martin Manues, whose a friend of mine who's a producer in London, came down to visit. And I said, “How about doing some movies in Tangier. They're awfully hard up and they need money here, and could use some.” And they did a thing called “Hard Contract” there, which was not much of a movie. But, anyway, they must have dropped about a million dollars in Tangier; it was a great help.

He was going to do some movies there. He had one scheduled, when he called me up from London one day and said they couldn't do it because, since the '67 War had come along, they refused to underwrite any insurance for a movie being made in a Muslim country. I said, “Martin, you know, Morocco is full of Jews. They're in the cabinet, they're in banking, they do all sorts of things here. Jews do not have a hard time in Morocco.” (There had been some problems there. We might get into that in something else.) But, anyway, he wouldn't do any more movies there. Now they've gone around to doing some. They're doing one of Paul Bowles's books, “The Sheltering Sky,” now. But it was a good thing while it lasted; it helped a lot.

Another thing was the Jewish community. The '67 War...

Q: This is the '67 War between Israel, Egypt, and Syria.

DIXON: Yes. People got very uptight in Morocco, particularly when the Egyptians got defeated. It was funny, because, up in the mountains where they were not Arabs, they were secretly pleased that the Egyptians had been beaten by the Israelis. The Arabs in the low country, however, said, well, you know, the Egyptians are sort of sissies, and if we'd been there it would have been different and so forth and so on. But they were very upset about it.

The result was, there was some problem against the Jewish community in Tangier. The president of the community, who was not far from our office, asked me to come and see him. I went to see him and we talked about these things. And I talked with the governor, and the governor assured me that every Jew would be protected. He was a great friend of Felix Benorush, who was a Jew. They were trying to get everything straight.

There were a couple of areas of difficulty. There were three or four very outstanding Jewish lawyers, the best lawyers in Tangier. The Moorish lawyers wanted to get rid of them and take their practices. Thomas Jefferson said, you know, when they elect them to judges, then they can split up their practice. Well, they wanted to get rid of the Jewish lawyers so they could split up their practice. And they went fairly far in sort of isolating the Jewish lawyers and frightening them.

But I caught on to this and reported to Washington and to the governor, who reported to the Interior Ministry, and we finally got the thing under control.

Another sort of tranche of the Jews began to leave. They had been staying and were going to stay. It peeled down a little further, but they're still there and they still get along fairly well.

I tried to get an art school to use the American School for summer courses in art, which they did. The head of the thing was Jewish, and I explained to him that there had been a slight problem, but that generally speaking the Jews were well treated in Morocco and

there was nothing to worry about. And he did open a school there, which got along very well, but for some reason they closed it up. I wasn't there when they closed it up.

We were also trying to get the American School on its feet. And we had a guy that was pretty headstrong. We got most of the money from the overseas school fund in the State Department, because it took mostly the children of Foreign Service officers. I had a time sort of keeping them in line and doing things that would not make them unacceptable to the educational office, plus trying to ask for help to write-up the explanations of what we were trying to do in the school so that we could make a good explanation of why we needed the funds to run the school.

I also worked with Jimmy Hall, who raised money to build the dormitory there. By doing that, we could take students from, say, the neighboring countries and have people come to school there, which made a great difference in the appeal of the school. I got that building built for a hundred thousand dollars; that's what Jimmy could raise. And a friend of mine, who was a contractor there, said he would build it for a hundred thousand dollars, which he did, and the rest of it was his contribution to the school. And it solved the problem, because the school was getting smaller and smaller. It solved the problem of the school, because people out of town didn't want to send people up there to live in God knows what kind of homes that were willing to take them in. But I thought that was an accomplishment I was proud of.

Q: Oh, yes.

DIXON: One other thing that caused friction with Doros was, at this time there was a great war going on between the Spanish and the English over Gibraltar. They had a thing called Smokey Sam that used to come in. A Spanish ship, sort of a frigate, would go in and sort of turn their guns on Gibraltar and sort of mess around some, but they never did fire anything in there. But the Spanish had closed the port on them, and there had been all sorts of gradual problems of drawing down Gibraltar.

The Gibraltarians were absolutely adamant against being part of Spain. They had seen the Spanish Civil War and all the cruelty that had gone on. You know, they were right there before, and from the hills and the buildings they could see what was going on in Malena and all those territories that go around Gibraltar. Also, you see, it's right across the bay from Algeciras, which is the town just right across the Bay of Gibraltar. They could see a panorama of this whole thing. And of course people tried to escape across the border. There were all sorts of things going on. They then saw the results of the Franco regime. When I first came to Morocco, Algeciras was still in ruins. The war was over in '39, this was in '56. M#laga was just blocks and blocks and blocks and blocks on end of ruins. All that part of Spain, they just said the hell with it. That's where, you know, the Republican government held out longest. They just said the hell with it. The Gibraltarians had seen all of this. They had seen the kind of outfit that Franco had had.

They had really a first-class democracy. They had a legislature, in which you could get up and say what you pleased. Freedom of speech, you could say anything you wanted to. And the British protected them from the Spanish. Therefore, under no circumstances, did they want to be part of Spain.

I did the reporting from there. I used to go over to Gibraltar about once a week and talk to the people and see what happened. Leon Doros didn't like my reporting on Gibraltar. They talked once about my having an office in Gibraltar. We had a naval attach# over there. But the Spanish objected to having any representation there, so we didn't do it. But I went over there.

Later, Tad Szulc, who was the New York Times correspondent in Madrid, called and said he'd like to come down and see Gibraltar. He wanted to report on it or something. So he came down and I took him over, introduced him to all the people there, and we talked. He went on back to Madrid. And, from then on, instead of coming down there, he called me up to know what was going on. So I would tell him what was going on, you know, from the

Gibraltar side; he knew from what the Spanish said. What actually happened and what the Spanish said happened were not necessarily the same thing.

Later on, when the inspector came, he said that he thought I was diverting time from Morocco, reporting on Gibraltar, and it wasn't necessary because it was all reported in the New York Times.

I said, “Well, the reason it's reported in the New York Times is because I'm reporting it to the New York Times guy, who writes these things up in his own way.”

He said, “You know, frequently the things that you write do come out in the New York Times. I mean, they also report the same thing.”

And I said, “That's because I'm giving it to Szulc.”

But they criticized me in the inspector's report for working on things that were unnecessary to do. Which practically finished my career in the Foreign Service—if it hadn't been for Johnson.

When I came back from Morocco, they really had no job for me, and I was sent to the Army War College. And I was told that the guy there was making an awful mess, that he wasn't doing anything, and that, in one of his activities, he had taken up pistol shooting and shot himself through the calf, and was doing all sort of other things that they were upset about.

Q: This is the State Department representative before you went there.

DIXON: He was the State Department representative while I was there; I took over from him later on. They said, “We don't know what's going on, but we would like you to come up there and sort of see if you can help keep things straight, you know, do whatever needs to be done.” But he stayed on for over a year. And very gradually I sort of took over his job; he just didn't do anything. And then he retired, and I still did it, but they didn't actually

name me as the State Department type until about, oh, I guess it was March or April, although I had been doing it for a long time.

But I take it, from that inspector's report and from the report from Bangkok, I went to talk to the people in Personnel about what I wanted to do next, and they absolutely just said, oh, we can't find you a job and there's nothing to do. They, I think, were hoping I'd just retire or something.

At the end of my term, when they sent Herman House to take my place, I got a job in EA at the UN. I'm the EA guy at the UN. And I eventually came back and worked on the Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Island desk. And then they had that big to-do about the Coast Guard returning a Soviet sailor to...

Q: A Lithuanian or something like that?

DIXON: Yes, there was a big investigation.

Q: I can't think of the name, but I remember this. He sought asylum, and the Coast Guard forcibly put him back on a Soviet ship.

DIXON: Yes. But, anyway, that's further down the line. I stayed with the Coast Guard over seven years, '71 through '76.

Q: What were you doing with the Coast Guard?

DIXON: Well, I'm getting to that later, but let me finish Tangier. I did a lot of reporting on Gibraltar. I got the Gibraltar government to recognize that we were not one-sided on the side of the Spanish, and that we were objective, and that we were interested in knowing what the facts were and that sort of thing. Which was fairly important because they were plenty burned up with us; they felt we were very much on the Spanish side.

I thought Gibraltar was important. It's the entrance to the Mediterranean. The Soviets were having something like eight hundred ships a year, which is roughly three ships a day, calling in Gibraltar. They were buying everything out in Gibraltar. The Gibraltarians were getting very friendly with the Soviets. And I felt we ought to show some interest in it.

So I made an effort with Sir Joshua Hassan, who's the prime minister, and with the secretary of the government, who was in the Foreign Office, Darryl Bates. They were the two principal people there. I also, of course, got to know a lot of other people. And I used to go out to talk to people at different parties and find out what they thought about things and keep the department informed on this. I never gave that kind of stuff to Szulc. I just told Szulc what factual things were happening. And, of course, I had very close... I mean, I could call up Sir Joshua and ask him something that we wanted to see about right away, or Bates, who was really one of our best contacts there. He knew everything that was going on, the reason for everything and so forth.

I'm trying to think what else we did in Tangier. I tried to get American businessmen that came there to interest themselves in Tangier in the Northern Zone. But largely the effort I made at this never came to very much.

Oh, there's one other thing that I must tell you about. There was a banker, named Thomas Stangby, who had been there during the days when Tangier was a free city. He was a very handsome, gullible guy that the women were all crazy about. He had a very nice wife. He had worked in the Saudi oil fields, and he had done other things, and he had come to Tangier and was working on something, when some big crook, who had a bank that was really crooked, took him in. He had made about a hundred thousand dollars. And for a hundred thousand dollars, this guy who was a crook gave his bank to Stangby. Stangby held on to the bank and was able to keep it. He didn't know anything about the banking business, but they were able to keep it afloat.

And when it came time for Tangier to stop being a free zone, he tried to move the bank to Panama. When he got to Panama, he didn't have enough cash in the bank to operate a bank in Panama, so he had to give it up. The bank closed. He settled whatever assets, which were very few. And everybody in Tangier was mad that had money in the bank.

He went to Germany on some other enterprise he got into. Somebody heard he was there and got the Moroccans to extradite him to Morocco, and he was being tried. They had him under the jail. He had gotten some squeaks out to congressmen and there was a lot of agitation about it.

Through the procural general and the governor, I got him moved into better quarters in the jail. I talked to him so I could find out what the hell this was all about. It became clear to me fairly early that he didn't know what it was about.

I found an American there, who had been in the CIA, who had bought a house. When Stangby was short of funds and wanted to move the bank, he sold a house that he had owned to this guy for something like thirteen thousand dollars. The house was worth fifty or sixty thousand dollars. This guy was pretty upset. He knew the house was going down, that Stangby was hard-pushed for it, and I guess he sort of pressed him. Or maybe it was all the cash he had, I don't know, but the guy wanted to get the cash.

Anyway, through him, I found out something more about the bank, and I found out from other people about what Stangby himself had done. We then got a lawyer for Stangby. He didn't have, really, a lawyer. And I used to go down to the jail to see that he was treated all right.

His wife was making a living by being a waitress in a very good cafe there and, I think, sleeping with the owner. It was a pretty pitiful situation. I finally insisted that this guy be tried. You know, they kept putting off the trial and putting it off and putting it off.

They had a trial and they found him guilty on a fairly technical, not important, thing. But they were insisting on, you know, finding him guilty of something. And I got the lawyer to appeal this thing. The appeal court judge I knew, but I didn't talk to him anything about it. But I told him I felt they ought to hold an appeal in this. I told the governor this.

Anyway, with the trail over and the appeal, we finally got Stangby out of jail. He had stayed there in town, and he was in sort of the unenviable position of having his wife support him in that rather dubious sort of way. We finally got the Appeal Court judge to hold the trial. And they finally let Stangby go, but it took almost three years to get that done.

Q: Good God!

DIXON: But it was one of the most outstanding consular cases that we had. You know, I used to really have to fight with some of these jail people to get them to treat him not like an animal. It was just awful. But we finally, finally got that settled. But that was one of the things that when I came over they said, “Please, for God's sake, try to get Stangby tried or out of the country or do something with him.”

Q: This is January 29, 1991. This is the third interview with Ben F. Dixon. Last time, we had just finished your time in Tangier. You were assigned from '68 to '70 at the Army War College. What were you doing there?

DIXON: I was told that the guy (who shall be nameless), who was a Foreign Service officer and an NEA type...

Q: NEA being Near Eastern and African...

DIXON: South Asia Affairs. I was told that he wasn't doing as they wanted him to, and that they wanted me to go up there, that he would probably retire, and that I would take over the job as the deputy at the Army War College. This was a very confidential letter that was sent to me. And I got there and I found my friend...I don't know how he got into

so many... But one thing he did, everybody had a thing who was there, sort of a spare-time project, and he took up pistol shooting. He promptly shot himself through the calf of his leg. I don't know, he just seemed to get his foot... He and his wife... His wife was acting very peculiarly. He just didn't seem to fit in. I came in and did as much as I could without, you know, sort of undermining him. And he did retire, but he stayed there about three months after I sort of took over for him. Then, after he left, I was assigned the job as the department's representative there, called the diplomatic advisor.

I had just gotten over a cancer operation, and I was having to do a lot of trips to Bethesda.

Q: The Army War College is up in Carlisle Barracks, in Pennsylvania, near Harrisburg.

DIXON: And my doctor was at Bethesda. I had lots of problems. They gave me not only cobalt but radium treatment, and I had deaths of glands, of bone fragments and so forth. They were continually surfacing; we didn't know whether it was another cancer or something else coming again. So I was down in Washington being checked on. And, at two years, it eventually evolved, I think, to be all right.

I took an interest in the NEA and the developing world things. They had syllabuses and study guides and all this sort of thing. They were hopelessly out of date. They gave me an assignment to conduct a seminar on the Soviet Union and on China and different things, and I had students that I advised. But I took off from my work to bring all these things in the NEA area and the developing world up to date. This was a hell of a lot more work than I realized it was going to be, and it kept me with my nose to the grindstone for a good year, trying to get those things up to date.

The second year was when the guy who had been assigned there as the advisor sort of doped off, and they asked me to sit in on the curriculum board, which is sort of the governing body for the institution, and various and sundry things. And he just disappeared from the picture, and, three or four months later, he left.

I also tried to bring speakers down there. I got speakers from a number of countries to come and talk to them about problems in that country or problems in that region.

My opposite number in Bangkok was Victor Leziovsky, who was at that time the assistant secretary-general of the UN. They make a trip to the UN every year. I sort of helped arrange that trip, and I also arranged for Leziovsky to tell them what Soviet foreign policy was and so forth. I tried to warn them that he was a very charming and enticing fellow, and that he would try to make them believe that the Soviet Union was the great hero of the world and that we were undercutting everything, very subtly, and to beware of this. We went up there and he talked to them; they all said, “My God, he's ready to defect, isn't he?” But he really sold them a bill of goods, and I had to stand up when we got back and explain to them that he was really taking them for a ride.

And then the FBI guy... said I had been talking to a very dangerous Soviet in New York. And I had to go through the Defense Department, and the Department of State, and the CIA to get things straightened out. They had apparently been tapping my telephone, or they had been tapping the telephone in New York to Victor, and they picked up me and said start tapping my telephone. We finally got that straightened out.

It was a nice respite. I was recovering from cancer, and it was a nice, quiet atmosphere, no real emergencies like when I was in Tangier when we had the Arab-Israeli War and all the other things that went on. I enjoyed being there. And I got their library stocked-up on the proper books for Africa and the Middle East. I got the study guides up, and I think I helped guide them on to what I thought was a little more serious study than they were doing on some of these things.

Q: We were just beginning to withdraw some troops from Vietnam, but Vietnam was very much in the forefront.

DIXON: It was very much in the forefront, yes.

Q: What was the attitude of these military students towards the State Department?

DIXON: I didn't find it any different from what it was right along. I've always had contact with the military about one thing and another, and they were quite understanding what the Foreign Service is and the State Department is. They try to translate it in terms of the Defense Department, and they don't understand why juniors call seniors by their first name, and they don't understand that people know who the boss is and respect him and so forth. They think the State Department is sort of a curious collection of people—partially sort of do-gooders and sort of out of touch with the realities of the world and that sort of thing.

There was a college there at which the students were very active in demonstrating against the war. And they came over to the War College and came up to the bridge. There was a trout stream that divided the college from the highway. The entrance was about three or four hundred feet, and then you came across a bridge and the stream, so it was a natural dividing line. They used to come right up to that bridge. And then I used to go out to the college, with two or three other people from the faculty, and talk to them about the war and so forth. I think we were able to prevent any serious outbreak, but I was one of the group that used to go down and talk to them when they walked up to the bridge and out at Dickinson College when they'd have seminars on things like this. We got some pretty rough-talking people about this, but I think they were mostly well-intentioned people who thought war was a terrible thing. And there was no question about it, but I think they were unrealistic in there outlook.

Q: Then you came back to the department, where you served from 1970, about a year, to '71, on the Australia/New Zealand desk. Were there any major concerns at that time?

DIXON: Oh, yes. Two of the primary things were buying Australian and New Zealand products, and the air routes. Quantas and New Zealand and I've forgotten which other airlines were going out there, but we had constant fights over this thing. They were mostly

aviation people, but I sat-in on all these discussions and tried to keep our aviation people in tow when they got too rambunctious (which they did at times). But the Australians were pretty rambunctious, too. The New Zealanders were much quieter and much better behaved, I thought.

I went up to the UN, before, for the Assembly meeting, and I was the Far East advisor. While I was there, the Chinese were very upset about what was going to happen, and I had no end of consultations with them—conversational therapy—about Taiwan and what was going to happen and so forth. And, in talking to them, I developed an idea about what we ought to do to try to solve this problem.

And I wrote a paper, which I gave to Win Brown, who gave it to what's his name, you know, the wisecracking, red-headed guy who was assistant secretary for Asian Affairs then, Marshall Green. They sort of said, well, you know, they're not letting us in on the game, there's no sense in even sending this paper forward. But I sent it also to the head of UNP, Sam somebody, and he thought it was a great idea, but didn't know whether the Chinese would go along with it. It didn't get anywhere much, because Hitler... [great Freudian slip] I mean, Kissinger and Nixon were deciding the policy then and nobody was getting in it. But, you know, in the end, they did more or less what I suggested doing. I don't know that they ever saw the paper, but it was the only sensible thing to do.

What I suggested was that they get Taiwan to give up the Council seat, keep a seat in the UN, and tell the Communist Chinese we were willing for them to become a member and take a Security Council seat.

I had a long talk while I was up there with Ernie Gross, who was our representative at the UN when the Chinese decided not to join the UN back in '49. And I had a lot of discussions with him about this. He was very knowledgeable about the background on these things.

But when I first got back, they wanted me to write up some papers on this, which I did. And I wrote a number of papers about Chinese affairs and some other things that came up.

We had been pressed very hard by Israel to support them about a number of things. And they were pushing me hard to get the Asian delegations to support Israel. We had a varied success with that.

One of the funniest was the Philippine foreign minister, Romulo, who was a real joker. Well, I can't tell you some of the things he said, which were pretty below-the-belt, so to speak. He was very helpful, but a great joker, if I ever saw one.

The one that I thought was going to be helpful was a guy that I had dealt with when I was in Thailand, who was their ambassador to the thing. He felt that we were sort of making him a patsy for the United States, and so he was pretty careful not to do what we wanted to do—even if it made him look bad.

But I'd say, in large, the main problems we had were Asia and China. This carried over. I got back, and then Win Brown said they were terribly short-handed in the Australia-New Zealand and would I help there until I got another assignment. And I said I'd be pleased to, so I went there.

Then, again, all the people in our area were trying to model their policies on China based on ours. We had no end of communications from the Australian prime minister, the New Zealand prime minister, and the new Fiji people about what we were going to do and so forth, and they'd write letters to the president. I'd write the response for the president to send back, they'd take it over to the White House, and never let me see what finally went out. We'd get another letter from the Australian prime minister, forwarded to us. Finally, I had a friend in the security advisor's office, I'd go over, he'd pull the files out, get the letter, and I could see how they had changed what I had done. (And they always changed it some, always for the worse.) So I could use that, you see, and then would try to follow up

the correspondence. But they wanted me to do it simply by answering the letter straight away. I could see that they weren't really giving them a very full view of what our point of view... the president sent.

I tried, in conversations with the Australians... Of course, the embassy knew about these things. I tried, as best I could without crossing what the president said, to sort of tell them to take it easy, that they hadn't made up their minds yet, and that these things were still pretty fluid—hoping they wouldn't get themselves too tied in.

But, of course, they did. And when they pulled that recognition of China, the Australian prime minister, I think it was one of the prime things that caused him to lose out, because he had claimed to be such a great fighter, and they turned around and just did absolutely the opposite from they had been telling him.

To a certain extent, that was true in New Zealand. The Fijians were sort of mad about it. But, of course, we had a terrible time with Japan, and all over Asia with this whole business. And if we could have, very carefully, clued them in to this, I think we could have avoided that. We lost a tremendous amount of influence in that area.

Anyway, I left there and went to the Coast Guard. The Australians were after us a lot. Two prime ministers came over. The New Zealanders had not gotten into the Common Market then, and they were very anxious to get their trade things up. And I saw a lot of their commercial guys, who came in constantly to talk about things they wanted to do.

Q: You then had really a very interesting job as a political advisor to the Coast Guard from '72 to '76. How did this come about?

DIXON: Well, there was a... what was he? a Latvian or an Estonian or a Lithuanian, I don't know which...

Q: Anyway, he was from the Baltic.

DIXON: Yes...who was on a Russian fishing ship. They were too close in, and the Coast Guard interrupted them. This guy jumped ship and got on the Coast Guard ship. He said he was trying to escape from the despotism of the Soviet Union. The Russian fishing ship guy told them that he had stolen things from them, and they were going to put him in jail when they got back, and therefore he'd escaped. A lot of consultation, not very good, between the State Department, the Coast Guard headquarters, and the local authorities in Connecticut, I guess it was, maybe Massachusetts. The result was, they put the guy back on the ship and he was taken back home.

There's a big Northern European lobby in the United States. You may not realize it, but they are fairly powerful. You may have seen the fights between the Israeli lobby and the Northern European lobby, which has come out about these guys they deported for having been guards in prison camps and so forth. The Northern Europeans have been pretty strong in putting this down. You know, after all, fifty years later, it's pretty difficult to tell who was really who and what they were doing and so forth. And that was one of the things they developed this lobby over. The Jews in this country were saying, in effect, that the Baltics were really supporting the Nazis. They didn't like that, and they began to firm up this lobby.

Well, it had gotten pretty strong at this time. And immediately, when he was sent back, there was all sorts of protest to Congress, the White House and so forth. With the result that there was a big congressional investigation, with that guardian of morality, Wayne Hayes from Ohio, who was finally caught out with that woman who was doing all sorts of fancy sexual tricks with him and so forth. Anyway, he was obsessed with the immorality of the Coast Guard in putting this man back on the ship. He conducted an investigation in which I think one admiral, a couple of captains, and God knows how many lesser officers in effect had their careers ruined.

The result was, how to prevent this, was to have a POLAD at the Coast Guard. Alex Johnson was the Under Secretary for political affairs, and he had been involved in this. I had worked for him in Bangkok, and he said he thought I was probably the best-qualified

guy to go into this. So I was sent over there. I didn't have a regular assignment then. I was working on some paper for them then, and they said they wanted me to get over right away.

So I went over, right away, to see the chief of staff, and I said, “You know, I'm working on a paper. It's going to take me about a week to finish this up and my business there. They pressed me to come over as soon as possible. Is it all right if I wait a week?

“Well,” he said, “we've gotten along for a hundred and seventy-five years without you, I think we can wait another week.”

Anyway, I went over and I called on the commandant. The commandant would never look at me. He would look at the wall, look at the floor, but never look at me. He was plenty burned up at the State Department. And, as the representative, I caught it. But I tried to go very easy with him and got him to laugh a couple of times, and he finally started looking at me. I began to be able to, you know, have an influence on him, but it took me, I guess, a couple of months before I could really feel at home with him.

The thing was, how was this thing going to work? Was I going to direct their international office, or would I have to be an advisor to the commandant and look at things that had an international bearing, for him? He said he'd leave that up to me; he didn't know how this thing ought to be run. And I figured the best thing was to act as his foreign affairs aide, rather than being an active director. They have since changed that, which I think has been a great mistake. In other words, I had a sort of a free opening to go into any department that dealt with anything on an international scale. The guy that's there now is simply running the international office, and he has to take his place along with anybody else.

The first big problem we had was, they were making a movie of that guy that defected, and they had a pretty terrible script. I asked them to give us the script, and I read over it. We went over all the things with the Coast Guard and the State Department. And gradually

I was able to get them to change the script so that it was factual, and to cut out a lot prejudicial stuff that was in it that didn't really add to the story one way or another. I think the Coast Guard was very happy that we were able to get this thing toned down, because it was pretty anti-Coast Guard to start out with. But I think the people that were doing this understood. I mean, you know, we'd discuss this and explain to them what different things were, and they came around and behaved very nicely. The movie came out and it wasn't bad.

I saw some people from the German embassy after that movie came out. You know, we found out that his mother was born in Brooklyn. I guess he was born in Brooklyn and was taken back there, and we got him and his family out. And the Germans were being sort of sarcastic about this. And I said, “Well, you know, we let him go home and get his family and bring them back, so everything has turned out all right.” He thought it was a good joke. And I thought they were being a little overly difficult about this.

One of the things that we had a great deal of difficulty with was navigational systems. There are all sorts of things. The old loran system, the loran C, and the...

Q: Which stands for long-range navigation.

DIXON: It had been generally accepted as a way of guidance, but we developed some other things which were...with satellites you could test other things. And then, again, we were going to put in about five stations around the world, so that you could triangulate from those things and find out precisely where you were.

We wanted to put up a station in Western Australia. The Australians were absolutely wild on the subject. They said that the Soviets would bomb them if we put that station in. And the newspapers got on that it was a CIA operation and so forth and so on. We had a hell of a time with the Australians over this. We finally got the thing in, but only after years of working on this with them.

We had terrible times with the Soviets, both in the Cuban waters and in the Aleutians, in their fishing in that area. They'd come out and fish in our waters; we'd take the ships; we'd have terrible, tense periods with the Soviets.

The Cuban fishermen all fished sort of from the Bahamas down to Cuba, and in all those passages and that sort of thing. So when the Cuban fishermen came from Cuba to the United States, they went back to fish in the same place. The Cuban Cubans and the American Cubans were always getting into fights, and the Cuban government sent out some MiGs to try to discourage the American Cubans away. This was beginning to get fairly serious, and Homestead Air Force Base, in Florida, was beginning to send up people to see what was going on. It began to work up into a pretty serious confrontation.

I was home one Saturday morning, and the Coast Guard—they call it the flight pod—called me and said that there was a lot going on down there and that they understood the Air Force was going to send somebody out. So I made a beeline down for the State Department and went in the Operations Center, and we got hold of the Under Secretary. And I said, “You know, I don't think those planes should go out there.” We explained the situation; there might be some efforts to fight or do something like that. And we finally got the Homestead planes called back, and we got the thing settled in due course. But it was for, I guess, three or four months, we were getting closer and closer and closer to confrontation, to the point that it was right on us. But we were able to stop it.

Let me say that working in the Coast Guard was a kind of problem that I had never run into in the Foreign Service. It was entirely new—navigational things, fishing rights, law of the sea and so forth—were entirely new to me.

The other thing where we had trouble with the Soviets was that they would run people up and down our coast to test for where our intelligence activities were. And we had to keep a tab on them all the time and run them out, get some planes to go and take a look at them.

The Coast Guard mainly was concerned with the function of who was off our coast and that sort of thing. That was another thing that kept us busy.

After the Carter administration came in, we started having detente in a serious way, and we were sending people to the Soviet Union and they were sending people to technical Coast Guard things, and they were sending ships in.

And some goddamned fool got the idea of sending a Soviet ship to Miami, which is primarily Cuban and Jewish—both of whom hated the Soviets like nobody's business. Somehow they, without checking with the State Department, said they didn't have any objection to it, before we knew they were proposing to come down there. I wrote and tried to stop the thing. And they said, oh, well, they'd take precautions and so forth. They realized it was a mistake, but they would take precautions.

We had a hell of time down there. They kept trying to get boats out and bomb this Soviet ship. You know, not anything from the government, but individuals would have homemade bombs and try to bomb this ship. They had demonstrations. You never saw anything like it in your life.

Anyway, we did get them to take a lot of precautions, and nothing serious happened except I think the Soviets were very disappointed in the reaction. They were really screaming and shouting and carrying on like nobody's business. The Soviets couldn't really go ashore and have a good time, which they were hoping to do.

The Canadians were a pain in the neck, too. We had lots of border-water troubles; we had lots of fights over George's Bank, which is a big fishing area. We were almost in continuous negotiation with them about one thing and another, and they were pretty nasty.

And one time we were having a conference in Ottawa. We had a good-sized delegation going up, and the Canadians had five or six people. And I asked the commandant, I said, “I think it would be a nice thing, you know we've been having difficulties in talking to them

about this, if I could take them up in your plane. Do you have any objection to our taking the delegation up there and then having them come back and pick us up?" He said, no, that would be good, he thought it would be helpful.

We got on the plane, and some damn Canadian girl I had never had much contact with...I sort of walked around and talked to people on the plane, gave them coffee and cakes and one thing and another...and I sat down and talked to her, and she began to ride me about Vietnam, and, as far as she could see, we were absolutely the black hats. I said, "Well, the United States tried to do something about this. You know, we offered, if the North Vietnamese would stop this, to let them in on an expanded Mekong development project, which could have done a lot for them."

She said, "You did no such thing."

I said, "Look, I was the one that recommended this. The Mekong project was one of my projects. I made a suggestion about eight or ten things we could do with the Vietnamese and sent it back to Washington. About six months later, President Johnson made a speech in Texas, at a college, in which he proposed that."

"I don't believe it," she said.

Anyway, I finished my conversation with her, but she sure did irritate the hell out of me.

We got up there and the Canadians were right nasty about the problems we had. You know, they wanted everything. We were a big country, we ought to be able to give way to them.

Q: This is the theme that comes again and again: Poor little us, you've got to give it to us. The Canadians are apparently very difficult to negotiate with.

DIXON: Oh, quite. We had a terrible time with them. All the time I was there, we had a difficult time with them.

The Australians softened up on that station. We got it approved just about the time I left. They had eased up on some, and they had combated their own press that we had troubles with there. And they explained it to the country so that they finally agreed to it.

But the Canadians, they were always hard nosed about everything. But I thought, you know, to be a guest on the plane and to be ugly like that was really inexcusable. She was a technician on boundary problems, she wasn't a Foreign Service officer, so to speak. I'm not saying that Foreign Service officers are perfect, but I think they have a little more training in how to behave with other people.

There were lots of projects that had to do with oil tankers. We were having all sorts of problems with oil tankers then. It's very difficult to get around the Cape of Good Hope because of the terrible winds and things that come up down there, so we had a lot of discussions with the South Africans about coming around the Cape.

One thing I remember particularly. The Japanese and the Iranians got into a proposal by some Iranian and Japanese private people, and their governments were sort of backing it. There's an island that used to be the capital of the Japanese area of the South Pacific. The main island with which it is connected, Babelthuap, has mountains on it. They're not high mountains, I guess they're probably a thousand feet, but the sea has washed it out so they look like they float over the water. But Babelthuap has a tremendous lagoon in it. The Japanese and the Iranians wanted to line the lagoon with rubber and use it for oil storage, run tankers from Iran and dump it into Babelthuap, and have the Japanese coastal people come and supply that way.

I thought it was a stinking idea. Babelthuap is one of the colonies that we inherited as a result of the war. And we were having a terrible time with all those people out there

because they were treated perfectly awfully by the government. And I could see that this would absolutely ruin the economy, ruin the island, and everything else out there. So I didn't think it was a good idea to encourage these people to do this.

We got hold of the statistics for this thing. At that time, they were predicting that oil was going to run out about 2010, when all the oil would be gone. And, in going through the statistics on this thing (they had lots of papers they got up for this), I found that they were going to amortize this thing through 2025. So I said, you know, what's the object? You're not going to pay for it before the oil gives out, so obviously this thing has got a lot of faults in it from the point of view of financing. And I found some other problems in this, so that we were able to knock that off.

We had another problem, for example, in Chile. There was an oil spill in the Strait of Magellan, and there was no way that the Chileans could do anything about overcoming the oil spill. They asked if we would help.

We had no formal agreement for doing this and they needed something right away. The commandant asked me was there anything I could do at the State Department to see if we could get this. So I went over and talked to some of the people, and somebody said, “Well, you know, we've got, I think, that kind of agreement with Bermuda, that, if they need it, we can go over and help them.” So I got the agreement out and found the wording in this thing and quickly wrote up a similar thing for us to adopt with the Chileans. The ground we could do it under, I found, was that it was threatening the food chain of Chile. So we worked out the same sort of arrangement. They got it done in about a day and a half, and we got some people down there right away.

The amusing thing was that, in the process, I talked several times with the Chilean ambassador and met with him at the State Department in trying to work out this agreement. Every day, I'd go over to Intelligence and read all the intelligence take. I found that they had taped all the outgoing traffic from Chile. They were having difficulties in Chile

at that time, you know, trying to overthrow Allende. They were taping everything. All the conversations that I had with the ambassador were in these intelligence things. Which I found amusing, if a bit irritating.

Anyway, we got that taken care of. So we found a way of doing this kind of thing—if it jeopardized the food chain.

Q: That's interesting.

DIXON: Another problem we had, again, was primarily with Norway about navigational problems. One of the navigational systems, they were afraid if any war came it would mean the Soviets would come and bomb them. Again, like the Australians. I don't know where they get all this. But the great, noisy people in the newspaper, both in Australia and Norway, were causing problems. We got over this eventually, too, but we had to change our way of doing things pretty severely to get that straightened out.

Well, the other thing that I found of great concern was that all these Japanese islands in the Pacific that we took over as sort of mandated territories for the UN, we were trying to get them to just come and join the United States. We had treated them very shabbily.

I remember particularly in the Marshall Islands they had all the Marshallese, practically all of them, on a small island literally cheek and jowl and the houses jammed up against one another. There were no playgrounds. There was a Coast Guard station there with a broad lawn and barracks, where people lived comfortably and so forth. But the rest of the island went right up to the wall. People were drunks at age eleven, who were having babies at age twelve, thirteen or whenever they start. It was the worst mess I've ever seen in my life. It was just awful. That was one of the worst.

In some of the other islands, for example...I don't know why I can't think of the island next to Babelthuap, but the old Japanese capital, they had absolutely...

Q: It wouldn't be Truk?

DIXON: No, Truk was great. Truk is a beautiful island, full of all sorts of activity, business and so forth, one of the few places that was going well.

They had let life just go down to practically nothing. They used to have strength in their lives and a fine, flourishing economy. They were all just living, you know, off of US charity and sort of welfare thing in what had been a flourishing community. They were all mad as hell at the United States and wanted to get free of it.

I came back the first time and I went over to the Interior Department, where they were controlling this sort of thing, and tried to read the riot act to them. And they said, oh, well, they were going to improve things right away, that they knew that things were bad and they were going to get it improved.

The next summer, I went out again and things, I would say, if anything, were worse. I came back and I talked to the State Department about this, to the guy who was the Under Secretary for political affairs, and he sort of shook his head and said, “Have to do something about it.” I went back and talked to the Interior people again, but nothing happened.

I went out there about every summer and took a look at those. I thought they were a jeopardy for the Coast Guard station, for one thing. You know, you might get a riot and they'd knock over the Coast Guard station there. And they had all sorts of important functions, for navigation, weather, all sorts of things that were being performed there.

Finally, a friend of mine, Chuck Schmitz, took over the job at Interior. I went over this with him in great detail. And he said that he thought it was bad and he was going to do something about it. But he ended up by getting thrown out. As long as I was there, we never got anything done, and I gather it's still in pretty bad shape. I noticed that some

of these places have not been very thrilled about having to become associated with the United States, which is, I think, the status that most of them have taken.

But I don't know what they've done about the Marshall Islands. I suggested that they might take another island and build a walkway so they could get over there. And they said, no, they didn't want to do it because they were using that for the testing ground for missiles—you know, shoot them from somewhere over here into the Marshalls. I thought they could have fixed up some playgrounds and things to get those children out of those houses, those shacks they had. It was just awful.

The law of the sea, the Coast Guard had a difficult time. We had a guy there who was literally the commandant, but who was not very talented in this kind of thing, who I didn't think represented the Coast Guard very well. So I used to sit-in on some of the meetings. And I felt that the other agencies did not understand the problems of the Coast Guard in some of these things.

The Coast Guard wanted to keep the borders as close to the United States as possible. In the end, they ran them out to a hundred miles.

The Coast Guard, towards the end, began to make its...well, they've got somebody else now, to make its views better known. But that group of people, they went on and on as sort of a self-aggrandizing bunch. They'd all say, well, everybody's been promoted but me. And they all got themselves promoted up and up and up. It got to be, I felt, sort of a joke.

It got fairly serious in the Carter administration, but when the Reagan administration came on, they absolutely blew everything. I don't know how much you know about it, but we, in effect, are beginning to recognize this international law, but we did not sign the treaty. We let them get away with a lot of things they shouldn't have done. Which, if we'd stayed in, we could have done something about.

It was, as far as I could see, sort of a hopeless operation, primarily because of the pressures on our people from inside the United States, people who wanted to dig metals out of the ocean and God knows what else, there are all sorts of pressures on this group.

Q: You were with the Coast Guard until 1976. Did you retire at that point?

DIXON: No.

Q: You went to the legal office?

DIXON: Yes, I'm a lawyer. They didn't have any immediate assignment for me, and I asked if I could serve in the Legal Advisor's Office. They didn't agree at first, but the Legal Advisor's Office said they'd like to have me, so I went and served there.

Q: What were the main things that you were doing?

DIXON: Well, one of the first things I did was... They said to me that we had bought some equipment from IBM to, in effect, take the spark off the roof, translate it into words, put it on paper, and pass it around. And all these machines they'd gotten from IBM to do this, the cost of it was, I don't know, absolutely unbelievable.

And Gene Mulberry said to me, “The District government wants to put a personal property tax on this thing.” And he said, “The IBM has been paid and wanted to collect it from us. We don't want to pay it, but we've got to take it up in the District government. I know they're not going to go along with it, particularly the money they've already gotten, but we've got to make an effort. Would you go down and see what you can do.”

Well, I didn't know anything about commercial arrangements, so I got out the books and read it, looked at the contract and so forth. I went down to the city tax office; I made the argument with their lawyer. Made the argument that, although this machinery was in the name of the IBM, it was in fact the property of the United States, and the fact that the title

remained with the IBM was simply a security arrangement. Because Congress can only authorize payments year-by-year, and we couldn't say the whole thing was a project we'd pay for in one year, or they didn't want to, I don't know which it was. So the arrangement was that they would keep the title to this stuff and we'd ask Congress for the money each year to make payments on it. And their security was that they held the title.

I got pictures of the machinery showing that it was bolted to the floor, and what it did, and described all this stuff. And went down and made the argument that they were not the real holder; the real holder was the State Department and they were not taxable.

Well, they looked as nonplused as I did. They didn't call me back for about six weeks, and I thought, well, I'd better call them. So I called them and they said, well, we were ready as ever, I guess, so come on down and talk to us. And in fact they said that I was right, and they refunded the money to IBM, and we didn't have to pay the tax.

Well, I felt pretty elated about this, because what it amounted to was more money than I'd ever drawn—the salary, educational allowance, housing allowance, and travel I had saved the government. So I had in effect paid for my whole service in the US government.

Gene Mulberry was, of course, delighted by this. They didn't expect to get anything out of it. But he just said, oh, well, you know, we don't get such good results, but we, in effect, try to hold up what is right, or something like that.

The Congress passed an act saying that people who didn't support their children when they were divorced and so forth could have their salaries attached. Nobody had worked out how this thing would work. And it was a mess, because all the people that weren't paying were not doing what they should be doing. The wives would call up the Department of State, saying what are you going to do about this and so forth. And they said see if you can't do something.

So I worked out a way of handling the thing, and also wrote up regulations about what would be done, who would do what and so forth. And I got the thing so it worked pretty accurately: They came into the executive offices of each geographic bureau; they sent it to the legal office, where it got approval; sent it to the pay office; they withheld the pay.

The trouble was, the word began to get around that I was the one that had cured everything, and all the wives began to call me. So I had to get my telephone number changed. And by this time, we began to get it straightened out so that that worked out all right. But that was an interesting thing.

Q: Oh, yes.

DIXON: The consular office was having lots of troubles about what they could withhold. And we had a guy...

Q: Was this in the way of information?

DIXON: No, this was concerned with visas and passports. They offered me the job as being chief of the Board of Appellate Review, which reviewed all the administrative decisions in the department. I was able to do this without spending much time on it. I started, actually, in the Coast Guard. I had a secretary, and she'd answer the phone and take the messages and write up any stuff that I had dictated after she left, and we'd go over that at the end of the day. I took care of the business like that, and also when I was in the Legal Advisor's Office.

I also got some reform done in the Passport Office. They were taking great pleasure in knocking people off.

An American woman who married a Saudi diplomat, who, when she got a little older and sort of wrinkled a bit, he threw her out. He had changed her passport to a Saudi passport.

He had taken her passport away. She had no place to go. She wanted to come back home. They wouldn't let her in. And so I found that she could be admitted.

They were doing all sorts of things they shouldn't be doing.

We had an American in Canada who pulled a pistol on the consular officer and said he was going to kill him if he didn't let him give up his passport, because he wanted to become a Canadian citizen. This guy ended up in England. The British were saying he was American and that he couldn't stay there any longer; the Canadians said he wasn't Canadian; and the passport office wouldn't give him a passport to come back here. I thought it was pretty simple to reverse that decision of the Passport Office, because the passport officer had done this under duress.

But the Passport Office was plenty annoyed with me over these things. But they were not, to my mind, doing the business as they should be doing it. They have since reformed.

We also had a terrible time with INS. There was a guy there named Rutnick, who was absolutely impossible. I suspected certain things were happening, and I asked INS to give us their records on this things, and they sent the things over. So I called Rutnick, who was the deputy commissioner and who I was supposed to liaison with, and I said I have reason to believe that so and so happened in this case, and I'd like to check your records on this.

Well, he said, “Well, this is highly confidential.”

And I said, “Look, don't tell me that stuff. I want to see the record, and if you don't give it to me, I'm going to go through the upper echelon here to try to get this.”

Well, he finally produced exactly what I thought it was, and we got that case straightened out.

But both the Passport Office and the INS were terrible. I think INS is still terrible. The Passport Office has gotten much better.

When I was in the Legal Advisor's Office, we also had a lot of problems about people applying for visas, and could they see their record, there was stuff in there. And we had a guy that tested, in effect, whether or not we could maintain the information on visa cases were confidential. I worked with the US Attorney's Office in those cases, and we got a decision in our favor, although it was a slightly different factual situation, so that the old cases that related to this did not necessarily apply. But we got found in our favor.

I had a number of consular cases that came up on the legal side, which usually involved working with the US Attorney. The big case I was given was the death of Americans in Chile in the aftermath of the Allende overthrow.

Q: Oh, yes.

DIXON: I became the department's lawyer in this thing.

Q: There's a book and a movie called Missing.

DIXON: That's right. Well, that's what this was about. When they gave me the papers on it, obviously not all the information was there. I had come to the end of my year while I was working on this, and they kept me on under contract to continue on this case. And I stayed there for another four years on this, and the Freedom of Information Center.

The first thing, I thought we had to get all the facts in the case. And that was very difficult. We had to get everybody's records, all bits of paper. You know, they have files that they send from the consulate or the embassy that go up to the State archives. They don't send them all any more, but they used to send most of them. I had to review all those papers. Finally, when we got all the facts in the case, we began to see what had happened, and then we began to try to adjust to the requirements of the Harmons.

They maintained, briefly, that we knew he was there and that we had procured his death because he had demonstrated against the war in Vietnam.

Factually, we found out that he had come there with some friends in one of those vans and driven all through South America into Chile. He had never reported into the embassy as being there. We never knew anything about it until after the overthrow of Allende came. Then, as you know, they had a big to-do in Santiago.

This boy was out in a coast town, and our naval attach# was there. And he heard the naval attach# say he was going back to Santiago, so he asked if he could ride back with him. The naval attach# said, “I don't think it's a good idea to go back there. I've got to go back on business, and I don't think it's a good idea for you to come back.” He said he was an American citizen. But the guy insisted, so he said, “Okay, I'll give you a ride back.”

I think what happened was, he and his wife went back, he went to his house, and somebody... There was a guy named Coco Paredes, who this guy had worked for, and his paper was anti-Allende. Harmon's family sent clippings from New York papers, which were detrimental to Allende, to their son in Chile, who, in effect, used this thing and wrote articles for Paredes's newspaper. They apparently had taken Paredes, who told them where this guy was, and they were looking for him. They had picked him up, and they either shot him in the stadium or they let him loose and shot him as he left. But they maintained they never had any record of him at all.

Q: These are the Chilean authorities.

DIXON: Yes. We did everything that we could to locate him. He obviously was not in the stadium. Of course, we didn't know all the places these people were, but we couldn't locate him. The Chileans couldn't locate for a long time. I don't know what turned up, but some of our people caught on to something, and they finally were able to identify his body. And I think, through the teeth, they established it was he.

The parents appreciated what we did, but then they came back and changed their story entirely and said that we had arranged his death and so forth and so on. And they got worse and worse, and then they entered a suit.

In the meantime, the Harmons were negotiating with a writer and a lawyer who was practicing law, to write that. He had told them about it, so he wanted to write the story up as a book. And they thought they could make money. And they, quite frankly, were enjoying living through all the notoriety they got from this and going through the throes of the death of their son and so forth. They had relived this over, and they seemed to get a pleasure out of it. They went to radio stations and did it.

In any case, we started the suit, and they kept requesting documents. We tried to show them everything that they asked for. We finally got to the point of just showing them everything except things that did not relate to it. When they asked for those things, we gave those documents to the judge, who read them and said they obviously don't relate to it. We also found the Harmons were committing perjury in several different ways.

They had, in the meantime, been negotiating to have this book made into a movie. They were beginning to make the movie. They did not want a judicial decision saying that there was nothing to support their case, because one of the big parts of it was that this was the actual fact. They therefore withdrew their claim, and the movie was made.

So then we tried to make public statements in effect saying that that was not true and what the true facts were. They didn't pay much attention to us. They were thrilled by the movie. Generally, the public liked it. And it was a good movie; it just wasn't true.

Q: Oh, yes, I saw it. It was called Missing, with Jack Lemmon in it.

DIXON: Nat Davis sued them.

Q: Ambassador Nathaniel Davis.

DIXON: Who was ambassador to Chile. I suggested to him that that company he was suing had endless resources. They would tie the case up so that he'd never be able to get any judgment on this. Well, he had a smart lawyer and they were going to try it in Alexandria and get it done right away. Just as I expected, they got the case transferred to New York; they got the thing tied down. And they never were able to do anything, until they finally ran out of money. Which is exactly what I thought was going to happen, but he didn't pay any attention to it.

Towards the end of this, when we were not having anything in court but waiting to be heard, they asked me to take on the job as legal advisor to the Freedom of Information Center. They didn't have a legal advisor. He'd left and they couldn't get anybody else. So I sat in there for almost a year, although they couldn't pay me. But it was the difference between my retirement and my salary, so I did the work free for them for almost a year. We had a lot of court cases in that. Again, I worked with the US Attorney a lot of the time.

Q: Well, say, this has been fascinating and I want to thank you very much.

End of interview